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ABSTRACT

This document is a compilation of 11 separate reports on the Houston Independent School District (Texas) support program, 1989-90, which paired over 300 first-year teachers with mentors who usually taught the same subject or grade level, were assigned to the same school, were experienced, agreed to work with beginning teachers, and were paid a stipend. The 11 technical reports are derived from studies of the perceptions of the program participants in October 1989, after they had taught for 2 months, and again in April 1990, after they had taught for 8 months. The following reports are included: (1) "Teacher Conservation Project Houston Independent School District 1989-1990"; (2) "Perceptions of First-Year Teachers of the Assistance Provided by Experienced Support Teachers"; (3) "Perceptions of Experienced Support Teachers of the Assistance Provided to First-Year Teachers"; (4) "Interviews with First-Year Teachers and Their Experienced Support Teachers"; (5) "Effects of Experienced Support Teacher Assistance on First-Year Teacher Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans To Continue Teaching; (6) "Perceptions of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternatively Certified Teachers"; (7) "Designing Effective Induction Programs"; (8) "Perceptions of First-Year Teachers of the Assistance Provided by Experienced Support Teachers after 8 Months of School"; (9) "Perceptions of Experienced Support Teachers at the End of 8 Months of School of Their Assistance to First-Year Teachers"; (10) "Effects of Experienced Support Teacher Assistance after 8 Months of School on First-Year Teacher Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans To Continue Teaching; and (11) "Perceptions of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternatively Certified Teachers after Teaching 8 Months." (JD)

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A Study of the Induction of 300 First-year Teachers and Their Mentors, 1989-1990

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A Study of the Induction of 300 First-year Teachers and Their Mentors, 1989-1990

Introduction

The Houston Independent School District conducted a support program in 1989-1990 that paired over 300 first-year teachers with mentors who usually taught the same subject or grade level, were assigned to the same school, were experienced teachers, agreed to work with beginning teachers, and were paid a $300 stipend. Mentors were expected to visit the first-year teachers' classrooms, assist in locating resources, provide emotional support, and help plan for instruction and classroom management.

First-year teachers met about twice monthly in job-alike informal sessions with mentors or professional development specialists. They also participated in a preschool workshop and formal training sessions during the year.

The staff development program for first-year teachers was designed to meet specific needs as identified by TTAS appraisals, mentor observations, and preservice records. Topics included district and building policies, practices, and regulations; unique characteristics and needs of the school and community; activities related to the opening and closing of school; policies and practices related to student assessment and reporting; general instructional strategies; content knowledge and curriculum assistance; classroom management and organization; communication and conferencing skills; self-evaluation techniques; and use of instructional media.

Mentors completed a training program that included communication and conferencing skills, observation techniques, models of instruction, effective school correlates, and specialized training in the Texas Teacher Appraisal System. A workshop in November 1989 for mentors focused on the correlates of effective schools: instructional leadership, instructional focus, teacher behavior/ high expectations, school climate, and measurement.

The eleven technical reports included herein are derived from studies of the perceptions of mentors and first-year teachers in October 1989 after the first-year teachers had taught for two months, and again in April 1990, after first-year teachers had taught eight months. Two other technical reports (Report Numbers 90-07 and 90-13) analyzed the perceptions of teachers to two day-long inservice training sessions.

Because they are not of general interest, and primarily evaluated those programs, they are not included herein.

The research reported in this series was supported by grants from the Texas Education Agency, the Houston Independent School District, and the University of Houston. The authors are grateful for their continued support. The reports of assessments during this first year of evaluation are listed below. The assessment of first-year teacher induction will be continued during 1990-1991 and 1991-1992, and will be reported in later documents. These results are summarized in journal articles and presentations at professional associations, but are included in full herein for those who desire greater detail.

90-01:	**The Houston Conservation Project** This report describes the program, its need and major components, and the research on first-year teachers and their support teachers.
90-02:	**Perceptions of First-Year Teachers of the Assistance Provided by Experienced Support Teachers** This study reports the perceptions of FYTs to the assistance provided them during their first two-months on the job.
90-03:	**Perceptions of Experienced Support Teachers of the Assistance Provided to First-Year Teachers** The perceptions by ESTs of their assistance to FYTs during the first two months of school are reported in this study.
90-04:	**Interviews with First-Year Teachers and Their Experienced Support Teachers** Interviews were conducted with 12 first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers during November 1989.
90-05:	**Effects of Experienced Support Teacher Assistance on First-Year Teacher Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans to Continue Teaching** The effects of ESTs and FYTs teaching the same subjects or grade levels and their classroom proximity on confidence, satisfaction, and rating of EST assistance; effects of EST assistance on satisfaction, confidence, and plans for continuing to teach.
90-06:	**Perceptions of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternatively Certified Teachers** Problems and assistance, confidence, and satisfaction of 69 regularly certified elementary teachers compared with those of 162 alternatively certified elementary teachers.

90-08: **Designing Effective Induction Programs**
Summarizes recommendations from ESTs and FYTs about induction programs.

90-09: **Perceptions of First-Year Teachers of the Assistance Provided by Experienced Support Teachers After Eight Months of School**
Reports the perceptions of FYTs of their problems and EST assistance during the first eight months of teaching. This is a follow-up of Study 90-02.

90-10 **Perceptions of Experienced Support Teachers at the End of Eight Months of School of Their Assistance to First-year Teachers.**
Perceptions of ESTs in April after having worked with FYTs for eight months. This is a follow-up of Study 90-03.

90-11 **Effects of Experienced Support Teacher Assistance After Eight Months of School on First-year Teacher Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans to Continue Teaching.**
Concerns of policy makers are explored in this technical report of the effects of EST assistance on FYT attributes. This is a follow-up of Study 90-05.

90-12 **Perceptions of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternatively Certified Teachers After Teaching Eight Months.**
Perceptions of their problems and needed assistance by teachers who completed a regular certification program and those participating in an alternative certification program in April of their first year of teaching. This is a follow-up of Study 90-06.

Document 90-01

TEACHER CONSERVATION PROJECT
Houston Independent School District
1989-1990

Teddy McDavid
W. Robert Houston
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The Houston Independent School District instituted a support program for the 1989-1990 school year to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The program was supported in part by a grant from the Texas Education Agency.

Because so many support programs include only marginal evaluation, and that which is included is not conducive to either improving the program or to increasing our knowledge base of effective strategies, the present program was evaluated using a number of procedures and strategies, including surveys of first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers, but also interviews with sample teachers and persons in various support roles. The results of these studies are reported in a series of research reports.

90-01: The Houston Conservation Project
This report describes the program, its need and major components, and the research on first-year teachers and their support teachers.

90-02: Perceptions of First-Year Teachers of the Assistance Provided by Experienced Support Teachers
This study reports the perceptions of FYTs to the assistance provided them during their first two-months on the job.

90-03: Perceptions of Experienced Support Teachers of the Assistance Provided to First-Year Teachers
The perceptions by ESTs of their assistance to FYTs during the first two months of school are reported in this study.

90-04: Interviews with First-Year Teachers and Their Experienced Support Teachers
Interviews were conducted with 12 first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers during November 1989.

90-05: **Effects of Experienced Support Teacher Assistance on First-Year Teacher Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans to Continue Teaching**
The effects of ESTs and FYTs teaching the same subjects or grade levels and their classroom proximity on confidence, satisfaction, and rating of EST assistance; effects of EST assistance on satisfaction, confidence, and plans for continuing to teach.

90-06: **Perceptions of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternatively Certified Teachers**
Problems and assistance, confidence, and satisfaction of 69 regularly certified elementary teachers compared with those of 162 alternatively certified elementary teachers.

90-07: **Assessment of Workshop for Experienced Support Teachers, November 11, 1989**
Reports the assessment of participants in the 12 sections of the workshop on effective teaching practices.

90-08: **Designing Effective Induction Programs**
Summarizes recommendations from ESTs and FYTs about induction programs.

90-09: **Perceptions of First-Year Teachers of the Assistance Provided by Experienced Support Teachers at the end of the Year**
Reports the perceptions of FYTs of their problems and EST assistance during the first eight months of teaching. This is a followup of Study 90-02.

90-10 **Perceptions of Experienced Support Teachers at the End of Eight Months of School of Their Assistance to First-year Teachers.**
Perceptions of ESTs in April after having worked with FYTs for eight months. This is a followup of Study 90-03.

90-11 **Effects of Experienced Support Teacher Assistance at the End of the Year on First-year Teacher Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans to Continue Teaching.**
Concerns of policy makers are explored in this technical report of the effects of EST assistance on FYT attributes. This is a followup of Study 90-05.

90-12 **Perceptions of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternatively Certified Teachers After Teaching Eight Months.**
Perceptions of their problems and needed assistance by teachers who completed a regular certification program and those participating in an alternative certification program in April of their first year of teaching. This is a followup of Study 90-06.

90-13: **Participants Evaluation of the Mentor Seminar, "Best Practices"**
Reports the assessments of 636 workshop evaluations for 14 workshops presented on May 12, 1990.

Need for the Program

Recognition of the unmet needs of beginning teachers has appeared in the professional literature for decades (Brooks, 1987; Ingebritson, 1950; Jersild, 1966; Ligania, 1970; Lortie, 1975; Ryan et al., 1980, to cite just a few). Prior to 1980, comprehensive programs to meet these needs were located primarily in other countries such as Great Britain and Australia (Fisher et al, 1978; Julius, 1960).

Accounts of isolated efforts to assist novice teachers during the past 50 years were surveyed by Johnston (1981) who found only a few that were evaluated. A 1982 survey (Marshall) of induction support offered by 72 districts across the United States indicated informal practices rather than systematic programs based on identified needs. In 1981 Florida was the sole state with a mandated induction program; by 1989, at least 31 states had either implemented or were piloting or planning some type of comprehensive support system for first-year teachers (Huling-Austin et al., 1989).

More recently the issue of separating assistance from assessment has been acknowledged in the literature. Huling-Austin et al. (1989) identifies the difficulty first-year teachers experience in sharing problems with, and seeking help from, those who will also determine whether or not that teacher will be retained. Schlechty and Vance (1983) give evidence that the dropout rate of new teachers during the first two years has reached a high of 30 percent. The Houston I.S.D. program focuses on assistance for novice teachers, and those in the support positions do not have an evaluative function.

Program for First-Year Teachers

Background

Under the direction of General Superintendent Joan Raymond, the Houston Independent School District has redesigned its professional development programs to be more responsive to the diverse needs of all the District's various teacher populations.

The District has recognized, however, that the most critical need of its overall professional growth and development program must be to address the retention of first-year teachers, the group in which teacher attrition is greatest. For example, in 1988-89, Houston ISD recruited replacement teachers from 150 universities in forty-nine states and three foreign countries. Houston ISD employed about 10,500 teachers, including about 1,600 new teachers; most of the new teachers were first-year teachers. As the teacher pool has become smaller, the need to retain teachers has intensified.

In collaboration with the University of Houston, the District field-tested a support and assistance program for three hundred first-year teachers, pairing them with three hundred support teachers during the 1988-89 school year. Houston ISD expanded this university-district collaborative program to full pilot status in 1989-90, involving one thousand especially trained support teachers paired with one thousand first-year teachers. Houston ISD also worked with the University of Houston to develop and implement an important subcomponent of this project: the Teacher Conservation Program for enhancing the quality and retention of minority teachers and teachers in Houston ISD's critical shortage areas. In 1989-90 Houston ISD's student population of about 190,381 included 33,000 students identified as needing bilingual or English-as-a-Second Language instruction and about 24,200 for special education programs. Almost 9,000 were enrolled in early childhood programs. According to the Spring 1989 Economic Eligibility Survey, 33,294 Houston ISD students were educationally disadvantaged. Based on accepted indicators, 67,814 were at-risk students.

Therefore the "Teacher Conservation Project" was added to the pilot program to provide more intensive assistance and support for new teachers in the District's critical shortage areas: bilingual/ESL programs, early childhood programs, special education programs, and for beginning minority teachers throughout Houston ISD.

This component provides a functional linkage between preservice and inservice years; it is not intended to replace the preservice student teaching experience. A formative rather than summative process, it is designed for assisting these special categories of first-year teachers; it is not an evaluation process for contract renewal or certification assessment.

Major Program Goals

GOAL ONE is to ensure quality instruction for students of the specified categories of first-year teachers by improving these teachers' effectiveness through a structured, systematic professional development support program that 1) promotes beginning teachers' professional and personal well-being; 2) assists them in achieving a successful first year in the profession; and 3) enhances their socialization into the profession. **GOAL TWO** is to effect ongoing improvement in the quality of instruction for all students by increasing the retention rate of promising first-year teachers. **GOAL THREE** is to strengthen the collaboration between and among area universities and Houston ISD to improve the educational programs in both settings. **GOAL FOUR** is to implement this subcomponent focusing on minority teachers, early childhood teachers, bilingual/ESL teachers, and special education teachers as a part of the pilot program that will serve as a model for the 1991 state-mandated teacher induction program.

Selection of Participants

About 1,300 first-year teachers and support teachers are participating in the District's pilot. Targeted teachers are those beginning a first year of teaching, whether prepared by a Texas teacher training institution or an out-of-state institution. A subset list has been developed of minority teachers, bilingual/ESL teachers, early childhood teachers, and special education teachers with no experience as a teacher of record. Included are alternative certification interns beginning their first year as a classroom teachers-- 25 with special education assignments with the severely handicapped pupils, 60 in bilingual classrooms, and 24 in ESL assignments.

Each support teacher must have demonstrated superior abilities and competencies as a classroom teacher. Many of the experienced teachers paired with beginning teachers participated as support teachers in the District's 1988-89 field test. A support teacher for an alternative certification intern must have achieved Level II Career Ladder or better. Level II Career Ladder teachers are given preference for the other beginning teachers. A "job-alike" or "same category" support teacher has been paired for the school year with each first-year teacher. Each support teacher receives a $300 stipend (funded by the pilot project). Although basically a collaborative relationship, the support teacher serves as team leader in working out this process. Whenever possible, the classrooms of the paired teachers are conveniently close, their non-instructional duty time scheduled the same, and their teaching ideologies somewhat compatible.

Project Description

In addition to shared conferencing time and some shared training, support teachers visit in the classrooms of their first-year teacher partners each semester during regular teaching hours, and first-year teachers visit in their support teachers' classrooms. Each observation session includes a follow-up conference. The support teacher provides help and locates resources to capitalize on the first-year teacher's strengths and to address his/her weaknesses.

Through observation and follow-up conferences, the support teacher assists the novice teacher to make appropriate instructional decisions. As needed, the new teacher is coached on content priorities, interpretation, updating, pacing, instructional techniques, and even providing instruction in knowledge of the content being taught.

The support teacher is the first-year teacher's on-site troubleshooter, preceptor, advocate, and sounding board, providing instructional assistance, peer counseling, and general guidance. By promoting faculty acceptance of the new teacher, the support teacher brings the neophyte into the teaching collegiality--a principal factor in maintaining a favorable school climate. The support teacher also serves as the first-year teacher's first line of defense against the depression and low morale often associated with the novice's encounter with the realities of teaching by assisting the beginner to stay focused on the work to be done.

The support teacher is the beginning teacher's primary source of information on the special characteristics of the District, the school, the community it serves, and its student population. Working with the professional development specialist when appropriate, the support teacher serves as the first-year teacher's liaison and facilitator in accessing the resources of other components of the Houston ISD professional development infrastructure.

About twice monthly, first-year teachers are scheduled for beginning teacher "job-alike" cluster meetings for an informal sharing of general concerns, experiences, and ideas. Support teachers and professional development specialists serve as cluster facilitators. The third and sixth cluster meetings during each semester feature a panel that may include master teachers, district specialists, supervisors, administrators, and university staff members. Panel members' expertise bears directly on the topics, questions, and concerns compiled by the first-year teachers themselves in previous meetings. Support-teacher cluster meetings for peer sharing follow the same pattern.

Although their primary responsibility is training, the professional development specialists constitute the first line of support for the support teachers and a secondary line of support for new teachers. They facilitate support teacher meetings (both scheduled and on request), make on-site classroom observations, and share in support-teacher conferencing. One professional development specialist is assigned to each instructional district. A specialist may assist another specialist when needed.

Each professional development specialist maintains a resource bank of books, periodicals, films, videotapes, and other instructional media that deal with professional development, pedagogy (philosophy and application), and other subjects for which beginning teachers show an interest or need. The professional development specialist serves as liaison and facilitator for all staff development activities involving the support teachers and the novices, and as resource personnel to the Teacher Conservation Subcommittee.

Counseling and Support. The Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services has designated the Director of Psychological Services to interface the instructional districts' psychological/counseling network with this program. A personal support and assistance program offers on-site and off-site psychological assistance and practical help for the beginning teachers because many of their problems fall outside the support teacher's domain. The first-year teacher may privately request assistance, or the support teacher may arrange it through the Director of Psychological Services. The doctoral psychologists, one in each district, work with the professional development specialists, serving as needed in training segments, cluster meetings, and with small groups on request.

Training. The specialists receive training about twice weekly throughout the school year. Their training covers program design, objectives and procedures; and presenting audience-specific workshops (e.g., universities, conferences, district and school administrators). Cross-training enables them to become truly multilevel, expanding the knowledge base of those whose major preparation and experience has centered on one educational level--whether elementary, middle, or high school--to encompass the other levels. As part of training, each professional development specialist has designed a personal professional growth plan for developing a specialty in depth.

In preparation for the 1989-90 full-pilot year, the 14 professional development specialists also participated in six-weeks training during the summer. Every assistant superintendent (or designee) dealing with any aspect of staff development participated in implementing this training. Further training is planned for the summer of 1990.

The Director of District-University Relations has conducted project-related training sessions for district superintendents, instructional specialists and principals. This training integrated the first-year teacher program into the effective schools design.

A training and support team made up of the professional development specialists, with special segments conducted by curriculum specialists and district administrators whose expertise relates to the topics, provided the support teachers with training prior to their assignments of the support teachers. Training topics included 1) communication and conferencing skills, 2) observation techniques, 3) models of instruction, 4) the teacher's role in addressing the effective school correlates, and 5) specialized training in the Texas Teacher Appraisal System.

First-year teachers served by this subcomponent (bilingual/ESL, special education, early childhood, and minority) are receiving the training provided all first-year teachers through the pilot program. Their training program has been designed to meet specific needs as identified by training and support team information (from TTAS appraisals, mentor observations, and preservice records). Appropriate topics include 1) district and building policies, practices, and regulations, 2) unique characteristics and needs of the school and community, 3) activities related to the opening and closing of school, 4) policies and practices related to student assessment and reporting, 5) general instructional strategies, 6) content knowledge and curriculum assistance, 7) classroom management and organization, 8) communication and conferencing skills, 9) self-evaluation techniques, and 10) use of instructional media. In one aspect of this training, first-year teachers are helped to appreciate their support teachers and to draw on their experience.

Support Teacher Workshop, an Orientation Workshop, some of the cluster meetings, and other workshops specifically requested (district and campus-level workshops) have been held. The first-year teachers also participate in Houston ISD workshops for new teachers and those for all District teachers. Comprehensive planning focuses on continuity between induction activities and those of other staff development programs.

Professional development specialists also plan and implement at least four scheduled, content-focused, mini-workshops each semester for support teachers and their bilingual/ ESL, special education, early childhood, and minority teachers. These workshops are held after school in the instructional districts. In addition, the professional development specialists are available for classroom demonstration and consultations on specific problems.

Two workshops preceded the school year--one for support teachers and an orientation workshop for principals, support teachers, and first-year teachers. A major workshop was held for support teachers in November on the Effective School.

The agenda for the Effective Schools Model Workshop centered on 1) the implementation of effective schools programs, 2) effective schools correlates relative to the continuous assessment of students' learning as a major contribution to their academic success, 3) the learning needs and styles of diverse student populations (especially minority, ESL/bilingual, special education and early childhood populations), and 4) innovative approaches. These topics embodied the effective school correlates: Instructional Leadership, Instructional Focus, Teacher Behavior/ High Expectations, School Climate, and Measurement.

Houston ISD and the Texas Cooperative Teacher Center Network will host a conference April 28, 1990 that will center on teacher induction and feature the Houston project. In June, the Project Director and the Principal Investigator, assisted by the Teacher Conservation Subcommittee, will conduct an End-of-Project Workshop. Houston ISD participants will include members of the pilot's Project Advisory Committee, the District's Professional Development Council, the professional development specialists, support teachers and first-year teachers. This workshop will focus on 1) presentations based on the Best Practices Casebook, 2) planning for further project disseminations, 3) a presentation of the project videotape, and 4) evaluation activities.

Project Products

Assisted by staff development and curricula administrators, professional development specialists have developed forty-two draft packets for program use. These packets are research-based (with sources noted) and tailored to District needs. For quality control, each packet has been developed according to the essentials common to any effective training presentation. The topic follows a prescribed sequential arrangement, with accompanying scripts for other presenters, handouts, and transparency masters. Each packet developed by a specialist has been reviewed by the other specialists and modified by consensus.

Packets developed during the field test stressed the philosophical base for support teacher and first-year teacher training. Many focused on theory relating to the learning needs and styles of diverse student populations, especially for those represented by the project's special teacher categories. New packets being developed during the pilot year focus on training applications: the "how-to's". These packets, which will provide the structure and focus for further training activities, are being modified to reflect needed changes identified in the field test as they were used through the specialists' observations and participants' feedback. Some may be combined. The packets are being produced as professional quality, self-contained units, complete and concise enough for use by anyone working with support teachers and first-year teachers. Careful formatting and appropriate graphics are being used to add interest and ensure clarity. The specialists are also fulfilling their growth objectives by attending seminars, workshops, and conferences related to their chosen specialties. These growth plans will culminate in additional training packets reflecting their specialties.

As professional development specialists work with support teachers and support teachers with first-year teachers, they are preparing and submitting best-practice narratives to the Project Director. The Project Director, assisted by the Teacher Conservation Subcommittee, will make the final selection of narratives for the Best Practices Casebook to be used in the End-of-Project Workshop.

A presentation on the Houston project was filmed and is being disseminated over closed circuit network of school districts served by Region IV. A videotape has also been made of the pilot year, centering on Houston ISD's support network activities, with a special focus on the program for first-year teachers in critical areas. Some workshops and conferences are also being covered. This videotape will be shown at area participating districts and institutions. A copy will be sent to the Texas Education Agency for further dissemination.

A Directory of University Resources has been developed by the University of Houston to profile faculty members (with their pictures) who have agreed to share their expertise. Information includes the means of contacting them and indicating the capacity in which they volunteer to serve: to respond to questions, written or by telephone; to serve as workshop presenters; to share in cluster meeting, and/or to provide on-site assistance. As workshop packets, the videotape, the Casebook, and other instructional materials are developed, these are featured in the Superintendent's Bulletin and copies are made available to Texas Education Agency and to overall project management.

Project Management

A Teacher Conservation Subcommittee periodically reviews the activities of the Teacher Conservation Project including 1) the support teachers' program (selection, training and ongoing support), 2) the design and schedule for the support and training program for first-year teachers, 3) schedules for the sharing meetings for support teachers and for first-year teachers, 4) the interface of the project activities with District and pilot program activities, 5) the development of project training packets and other products, 6) the evaluation design schedule, and 7) reviews of program implementation and budgetary expenditures.

The Teacher Conservation Subcommittee includes the Project Director, the Associate Dean, the Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services, the Director of Psychological Services, the Director of Early Childhood Programs, the director of Alternative Certification, the Director of Special Education Program Development and Coordination, and the

Director of Teacher Training. The Subcommittee assists the Project Director with major project events such as the Effective Schools Workshop. Adjunct subcommittee members who serve in related matters are some university professors, the professional development specialists, support teachers and first-year teachers (including some who were new teachers last year). District curriculum specialists participate as needed.

The professional development specialists are responsible for project activities in the 14 instructional districts. Each school principal with a first-year teacher in this project is responsible for the administration of entry-level teacher program activities on that campus, and for providing requested information on support teacher candidates to project administrators making support teacher selections. The principal is apprised of support team activities, and serves as a resource person to the team; the support teachers and the first-year teachers provide REINFORCEMENT and direction as needed.

"Every master's career begins with a first year."

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Study 90-02

PERCEPTIONS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS OF THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHERS

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The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. The present study analyzes the perceptions of first-year teachers after having taught for two months. The specific questions that directed this study include:

1. What were the major problems as perceived by first-year teachers (FYTs) during the first two months of school?

2. To what extent did FYT perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving these problems?

3. To what extent and in what areas did FYTs perceive their ESTs to have assisted them?

4. What differences, if any, were there between FYTs who taught academic courses in secondary schools, ancillary courses in secondary schools, special education, bilingual education, and English as a Second Language?

5. In what ways did FYT suggest that ESTs could have been of more assistance during the first two months of school?

6. To what extent and in what ways were persons other than the ESTs helpful to FYTs? To what extent did Professional Development Specialists work with individual FYTs?

7. To what extent did FYTs feel confident and satisfied after two months of school?

8. What vocational plans did FYTs have after two months of teaching?

Characteristics and Teaching Assignments of First-Year Teachers

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the demographic characteristics of first-year teachers. Their gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, and certification status are included in the first table while the nature of their teaching assignment is included in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	67	22
Female	235	77
Age		
21-25	90	30
26-30	59	19
31-35	51	17
36-40	39	13
41-45	28	9
46-50	8	3
51-55	5	2
56-60	1	0
Not indicated	23	8
Marital Status		
Single	140	47
Married	130	43
Divorced	39	10
Racial or Ethnic Identification		
Black, not of Hispanic origin	70	23
Hispanic	54	18
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	1
White, not of Hispanic origin	172	57
Certification Status		
Certified in field in which teaching	105	36
In alternative certification program	169	58
Certified but teaching in different field	10	3
Not certified	11	3

Over three-fourths of FYTs were female, and nearly half single. The median age of first-year teachers was 30, with 30 percent younger than 25 and 27 percent over 35. Fifty-seven percent (57%) were White, 23 percent

Black, and 18 percent Hispanic. Thirty-six percent (36%) were certified in the field in which they were teaching and 58 percent were in an alternative certification program. While this study analyzes all FTYs, alternative certification program teachers who had little professional education training are compared with FYTs who were fully certified in Study 90-05.

Table 2: Teaching Assignment

	Frequency	Percent
Level		
Preschool-Grade 3	175	58
Elementary Grades 4-6	74	25
Middle School/Jr. High	21	7
Senior High School	32	11
Content Field		
Secondary Academic Subjects	61	20
Sec. Ancillary Subj (band, PE, Voc)	9	3
Bilingual Education	73	24
Special Education	10	3
English as a Second Language	31	10
Percent of assignment in grades or subjects in area of certification		
None	17	6
25%	8	3
50%	9	3
75%	23	8
100%	238	81
Proportion of Students from minority groups		
Less than 10%	4	1
11-30%	6	2
31-70%	27	9
71-90%	43	15
More than 90%	215	73
Number of mainstreamed students		
None	130	45
One	40	14
Two or three	62	21
Four or five	29	10
More than five	31	11

Eighty-three percent (83%) of FYTs taught in elementary schools, with 58 percent teaching in the primary grades (preschool - grade 3). Eighteen percent (18%) taught in secondary schools. Most of the secondary teachers taught academic subjects. One-fourth (24%) were bilingual teachers, 10 percent English as a second language teachers, and only 3 percent special education teachers. Eighty-one percent (81%) were teaching in their area of certification.

Their teaching assignments were primarily in minority schools. Seventy-three percent (73%) taught classes with over 90 percent minority students, 15 percent of FYTs taught classes with 71 - 90 percent minority students, and only 3 percent were assigned to classes with less than 30 percent minority pupils. Eleven percent (11%) had more than 5 mainstreamed students and another 31 percent from two to five mainstreamed students; however, 45 percent had none in their classes.

Problems of First-year Teachers

The first question explored in this study was **What were the major problems as perceived by first-year teachers during the first two months of school?** A series of problems were included in the survey and first-year teachers asked to rate them as a major problem (5), a problem (3), or not a problem (1). The mean ratings, standard deviations, and ranks of each of the identified problems are included in Table 3.

Table 3: Problems of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	2.54	1.45	5
Student Motivation	2.17	1.22	7
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.70	1.55	3
Personal Financial Problems	2.25	1.45	6
Managing Teacher Time	2.55	1.34	4
Parent Cooperation	2.00	1.27	9
Amount of Paperwork	3.37	1.52	1
School Administration	1.51	1.13	12
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.49	1.05	13
Lack of Personal Time	2.97	1.51	2
Student Involvement	2.05	1.31	8
Burn-out	1.73	1.20	11
Peer Acceptance	1.31	.92	14
Grading Students	1.82	1.17	10

The major problem identified by FYTs was the amount of paperwork they were expected to complete (M = 3.37). Lack of personal time was ranked second (M = 2.97) and Lack of adequate materials and equipment third (M = 2.70). Managing teacher time was fourth (M = 2.55) and managing the classroom fifth (M = 2.54). When these are considered as a whole, they reflect the FYTs need to organize and manage time, resources, self, and students. Peer acceptance (M = 1.31), lack of teaching freedom (M = 1.49), and school administration (M = 1.51) were not considered problems by FYTs.

Experienced Support Teacher Assistance In Solving Problems

The second research question in the study was: **To what extent did first-year teachers perceive their experienced support teachers to be helpful in solving these problems?** They were asked to respond using the scale, greatly assisted me (5); some assistance (3); or no assistance (1). Table 4 includes mean ratings for first-year teachers.

Table 4: Support by EST in Solving Problems Of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	2.96	1.43	1
Student Motivation	2.64	1.48	6
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.93	1.53	2
Personal Financial Problems	1.63	1.27	14
Managing Teacher Time	2.64	1.47	6
Parent Cooperation	2.45	1.47	9
Amount of Paperwork	2.42	1.45	11
School Administration	2.77	1.54	4
Lack of Teaching Freedom	2.47	1.55	8
Lack of Personal Time	2.24	1.45	13
Student Involvement	2.43	1.45	10
Burn-out	2.38	1.58	12
Peer Acceptance	2.64	1.60	6
Grading Students	2.84	1.49	3

Assistance with problem solution was not highly rated by FYTs; the mean ratings for not one of these problem areas was 3.00, "Of Some Assistance." The highest rated support was in classroom management (M = 2.96). While 69 FYTs or 23 percent rated their EST either 4 or 5 (great assistance), an equal number (70) indicated a 1 (no assistance) in classroom management.

While ESTs provided the greatest support in classroom management (M = 2.97), this was closely followed by materials and equipment (M = 2.93), grading students (M = 2.84), and working with school administration (M = 2.77). As one would expect, the least assistance provided FYTs was related to their personal financial problems (M = 1.63).

When the results of Table 3 are compared with those of Table 4, it is evident that ESTs are not emphasizing the areas of most concern to FYTs. The two most difficult problems, amount of paperwork and lack of personal time, were ranked 11th and 13th respectively in terms of EST support. To determine the strength of these differences, t tests were computed to compare the strength of problems as perceived by FYTs and the extent of EST assistance, as perceived by FYTs. These data are included in Table 5.

Table 5: Strength of FYT Problems and Extent of EST Assistance as Perceived by FYTs

	Strength of FYT Problem Mean	Extent of Perceived EST Assistance Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.54	2.96*	2.15	.033
Student Motivation	2.17	2.64*	2.95	.004
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.70	2.93		
Personal Financial Problems	2.25*	1.63	5.80	.0001
Managing Teacher Time	2.55	2.64		
Parent Co-operation	2.00	2.45*	2.51	.013
Amount of Paperwork	3.37*	2.42	8.45	.0001
School Administration	1.51	2.77*	7.82	.0001
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.49	2.47*	6.04	.0001
Lack of Personal Time	2.97*	2.24	6.37	.0001
Student Involvement	2.05	2.43*	2.00	.047
Burn-Out	1.73	2.38*	3.51	.001
Peer Acceptance	1.31	2.64*	8.50	.0001
Grading Students	1.82	2.84*	6.65	.0001

When FYTs rated the strength of their problems and the extent of EST assistance in solving those problems, significant differences resulted in 12 of the 14 problem areas. For 9 of these 12 areas, the extent of EST assistance exceeded the strength of the problems. ESTs did not provide assistance that matched the strength of the problem in three areas. Personal financial problems was the first, and one in which one would not expect ESTs to provide direct assistance (although many did provide emotional support when finances were being discussed). The other two areas, amount of paperwork and lack of personal time, are areas that experienced teachers could be of considerable assistance to neophytes.

Ways in Which Experienced Support Teachers Worked With First-Year Teachers

The third research question was: **To what extent and in what area did FYTs perceive their ESTs to have assisted them?** This research question was addressed in four ways. First, FYTs were asked to rate the effectiveness of the assistance provided by ESTs and the effectiveness of their coaching. Second, a listing of ten areas were listed and FTYs asked to rate the extent of EST assistance in each area. Third, FYTs were asked to list the contacts with ESTs over the preceding two-week period to assess the assistance provided in November. Finally, FYTs were asked in an open-ended question to identify the ways ESTs had helped them during the first two months of school. Findings from each of these three data sources are discussed in this section.

EST Assistance and Effectiveness

Two questions asked FYTs to rate the effectiveness of EST assistance in general and their effectiveness as a coach. These data are included in Table 6.

Table 6: Assistance provided by ESTs as Perceived by FYTs

	Frequency	Percent
Assistance Provided by EST		
No contribution; may have impeded my growth	16	6
Somewhat helpful	51	18
Supportive; gave me ideas and information	99	34
Made my beginning days of school much easier	59	23
Outstanding, could not have survived without EST	66	23
Mean = 3.37; S.D. = 1.17		
Effectiveness as a Coach		
Very Ineffective	35	12
Ineffective	34	12
Adequate	69	23
Effective	72	24
Very Effective	86	29
Mean = 3.47; S.D. - 1.33		

Forty-three percent of FYTs felt their ESTs had been a very positive influence on their careers as a teacher. However, nearly one-fourth of them (24%) believed their EST had not been of much assistance. More than half (53%) indicated that their ESTs were effective or very effective as coaches for beginning teachers while one fourth (24%) considered them ineffective.

FYT Ratings of Support by EST in Identified Areas

Support teachers helped first-year teachers in specific areas other than with problems. Table 7 summarizes data on the extent to which ESTs were perceived by FYTs as being helpful in areas identified in previous research as being important to FYTs (Odell, 1989, p,31). FYTs used the following scale in assessing ESTs support: greatly assisted me (5); some assistance (3); or no assistance (1). Mean ratings, standard deviations, and ranks are included in Table 7.

Table 7: Assistance by Experienced-Support Teachers of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Systems Information	3.52	1.35	2
Mustering Resources	3.26	1.58	5
Instructional Information	3.41	1.47	3
Emotional Support	3.66	1.50	1
Advice on Student Management	3.39	1.53	4
Advice on Scheduling and Planning	3.17	1.58	8
Help With the Classroom Environment	2.69	1.58	10
Demonstration Teaching	3.21	1.64	7
Coaching	3.24	1.58	6
Advice on Working with Parents	2.92	1.57	9

Areas from Odell, S. J. Developing support programs for beginning teachers. In L. Huling-Austin et al., Assisting the Beginning Teacher (p. 31). Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

ESTs were perceived by FYTs to provide greater support in areas other than those identified as problems. Only two of ten areas had mean ratings less than 3.00 -- help with classroom environment (M = 2.69) and advice on working with parents (M = 2.92). The highest ranked areas of assistance were emotional support (3.66), systems information (M = 3.52), instructional information (M = 3.41), and advice on student management (M = 3.39).

EST Support During Preceding Two-Weeks

In chart form, first-year teachers were asked to list the incidents in which ESTs had worked with them during the preceding two-week period.

For each incident, they were asked to indicate the time spent on the problem, who initiated the contact, how important the problem area was, and how effective the contact was. Their responses are summarized in this section of the report.

First-year teachers listed the ways their ESTs had been of assistance to them over the preceding two-week period. When these were synthesized, they could be grouped into ten areas. Listed according to the number of incidents for each area, they include 1) sharing materials, equipment and ideas; 2) helping plan for and deliver instruction; 3) advising on classroom management and organization; 4) observing first-year teacher by the support teacher; 5) preparing for assessment; 6) assisting with student evaluation and reporting to parents; 7) explaining policies, procedures and expectations of the district and the school; 8) working together in a general way such as attendance at meetings at which "many things were discussed"; 9) offering emotional support; and 10) observing the support teacher by the first year teacher.

Table 8 includes data on the percentage of first-year teachers reporting assistance in that area; maximum and median time spent on incidents; percentages of extent to which helping contacts were initiated by the experienced support teacher (EST), first-year teacher (FYT), mutually (BTH), or by another person (OTR); degree to which the problem was perceived to be important to the first-year teacher (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very important); and degree to which the contact was perceived to have been effective by the first-year teacher (on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very effective).

Several findings can be drawn from these data. First, contacts between the ESTs and FYTs during the preceding two-week period most often had to do with sharing materials, equipment and ideas. Thirty percent of ESTs worked with FYTs in this area --twice as many as in the area of preparation for assessment (14 percent). However, only 63 percent of the FYTs being assisted by sharing materials rated the problems as "very important" while 94 percent of those receiving help in preparing for assessment rated that assistance as "very important." Further, help with materials was initiated by ESTs 18 percent more often than by FYTs, whereas help in preparing for assessment was initiated 9 percent more often by FYTs than ESTs. Is it possible that offering help with materials is a more comfortable area for experienced teachers than preparing first-year teachers for assessment?

Second, the area in which least assistance was provided was FYT observation of ESTs. Those observations that did occur were initiated 26 percent more often by the EST than the FYT. However, 83 percent of FYTs experiencing those observations rated them as "very important" and "very effective." Does this suggest that it would be helpful to explore why so few

Table 8: Summary of Support Provided First-Year Teachers

Area of Support	% of FYT Reprtng Area	Max Time (hrs)	Median Time (hrs)	% Initiated By EST	FYT	BTH	OTR	Importance of Problem R=5	R=1	Effective of Cntact R=5	R=1
Sharing Materials	30	8.00	.50	47	29	24	0	63	9	66	4
Planning, Delivering Instruction	25	10.80	.70	40	39	20	1	69	2	83	1
Classroom Management, Organization	20	4.30	.50	43	43	12	2	78	0	61	2
Observations of FYT By Exp Spt Teacher	20	6.10	.80	52	35	9	0	61	9	54	13
Preparation for Assessment	14	6.80	1.00	44	53	3	0	94	0	75	3
Student Evaluation Reporting to Parents	12	2.80	.50	36	54	3	7	64	4	71	0
Policies, Procedures Expectations	11	14.50	1.50	31	54	12	3	77	4	81	0
General Assistance (e.g., meetings)	9	2.10	.80	45	25	10	20	60	1	50	5
Emotional Support	8	4.80	.50	45	39	11	5	78	0	67	0
Observation of ExpST by First-Yr Teacher	5	7.30	.60	59	33	8	0	83	0	83	0

FYTs observe their EST in the induction process, and why such observations are not more widely initiated by the support teacher?

Third, the literature on induction indicates that FYTs need considerable emotional support. During this two-week period, only 8 percent of respondents reported receiving emotional support, but 78 percent of them rating the problems as "very important" (none rated problems in this area as unimportant). Are there fewer novices in this group needing emotional support because the program offers ongoing support in dealing with the challenges of the work of teachers?

Fourth, FYTs and ESTs initiated the contact about an equal number of times. Of the 354 incidents of assistance, ESTs initiated 44 percent while

FYTs initiated 40 percent. ESTs took the initiative in five areas, including sharing materials, observing the FYTs, being observed by FYTs, providing emotional support, and general assistance. FYTs took the initiative in requesting help in preparation for assessment; explanation of policies, procedures and expectations; and evaluation of students/reporting to parents.

Fifth, while the range of time spent meeting the needs of FYTs varies greatly, the median time spent had a more limited range; assistance in preparing for assessment required one hour, while 1 1/2 hours were devoted on the average to policies, procedures and expectations. The median for all other areas was between 30 and 50 minutes. Some of the extensive amounts of time recorded (for example, 14 hours and 30 minutes spent on elucidation of policies, procedures and expectations appeared to include full-day workshops. These data, however, suggest that ESTs and FYTs need "chunks" of time together, and that such time should be built into the program.

Sixth, the importance of the problems that ESTs dealt with and the effectiveness of that assistance were both rated very high. Fourteen percent (14%) of FYTs received assistance in preparing for assessment; but 94 percent of them rated their problems as very important. At least 60 percent of FYTs rated their problems in any area as very important.

The effectiveness of the help received was rated as "very important" by 50 percent or more of the recipients of help in each area. Help in three areas was rated most effective: planning and delivering instruction (83%), observations of EST by FYT (83%), and explaining policies, procedures and expectations (81%).

The data suggest that problems and concerns dealt with by ESTs and FYTs are, for the most part, deemed to be very important ones, and that when these problems and concerns are addressed, the process is highly effective. The fact that the area considered as highly important by the smallest percentage (60%) and to be highly effective by the smallest percentage (50%) was general assistance suggests that time may be better spent by the pair on specific needs of the novice.

A final note: 42 respondents (18%) did not indicate receiving any assistance during the two-week period. Reasons for this response might need to be explored.

EST Assistance During First Two Months of School

The preceding analysis refers to EST assistance during a two-week period. In an open-ended question, FYTs were asked to identify the specific ways in which their experienced support teachers had helped them during the first two months of school. Their responses are summarized in this section of the report.

First-year teachers identified eight areas of support: overall valuing of the support teacher as an essential resource; planning and presenting instruction; organizing and managing classrooms; providing and sharing materials; listening and supporting emotionally; informing as to school and district policies and practices, expectations of colleagues and administrators, special events, etc.; advising and coaching for assessment; evaluating students and reporting to parents.

Overall Valuing of the Support Teacher as an Essential Resource. Responses ranged from an extremely high degree of valuing such as: "She has saved my life numerous times and has always been there when I needed her." "She lent me so many things. I could not have had a better EST. She was great!" "Super, super supportive!", expressed by 24 percent of the respondents, to a very low valuing by 8 percent who made such comments as: "She has not been useful at all. I only see her about once a week, if I'm lucky." "My EST has done nothing to really help me. I have borrowed one book of nursery rhymes when I left my book at home. She gave me one gingerbread man to cut my patterns from. She gave me some ziplock bags a friend gave to her. I had to return all the above."

In between were those 68 percent of responding FYTs who acknowledged receiving good and useful help, and expressed their valuing in terms such as: "He is an excellent teacher, and observing him as he teaches has been very helpful to me." "She's available whenever I need her." "She's willing to share herself, her time and her abilities."

Planning and Presenting Instruction. Direct help in lesson planning, suggestions of activities and ideas to convey subject matter, collaborative planning (especially at the beginning), and the encouragement of creativity in teaching strategies were positively reported as significant contributions of ESTs by 46 percent of the respondents. A small number reported that assistance was given in this area only when requested by the FYT.

Representative comments included: "She has taught me and demonstrated how easy it is to correlate subjects, especially in reading, language and spelling." "He has given ideas on how to organize creative projects for art, creative writing and science---also some ideas on how to group students based on level." "As a bilingual teacher, she has helped me to not mix Spanish and English into the lesson."

The main suggestion of FYTs in this area is that ESTs should not wait of offer support until the FYT asks a question, but rather, they should be sensitive to the novice's needs. Several first-year teachers expressed reluctance to "burden my EST because she has so much to do of her own."

Organizing and Managing the Classroom. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the FYTs appreciated ESTs' assistance in one or more of the elements of organizing and managing the classroom: specific techniques to use in handling discipline problems; structuring the classroom physically, including seating arrangements, bulletin boards displays, etc.; establishing proactive management rules; scheduling and management of time. A small number of respondents stressed the value of advice in this area given before the beginning of the school year.

Typical comments included: "She's helped me work with my tougher discipline problems---time out in another room." "She helped me greatly in walking kids to the restroom." "Jane has given me specific suggestions on what to do to gain more control in my classroom." "He was very helpful in showing me how to manage my time.." "...gave me an idea for a weekly conduct report...works great in my classroom." "...helped me to get my room in order for the first day. Without this help I don't think I would have made it."

Providing and Sharing Materials. More than 25 percent of the FYTs valued the extent to which support teachers shared materials with them, helped them to procure needed supplies and materials, and guided them in making maximum use of existing materials. Among the comments: "She has provided me with a lot of materials for my classroom." "She has given me all the materials (objectives, TEAMS work, creative writing paper and has asked for things she didn't have that I needed for teaching." "Mrs. W. supplied me with teaching materials because our books were issued late. Prior to that I was really floundering to find materials to keep my students engaged."

A small number (less than one percent) of respondents specifically indicated ESTs' reluctance to share materials and ideas. In the words of one such novice, "She doesn't lead ideas readily--things that may help."

Listening and Supporting Emotionally. For 42 percent of the responding FYTs, the positive encouragement, moral support, trust and friendship offered by the EST was indicated to be one of very great value. Many wrote of the importance of having someone to listen, to show concern, to be "calming", "positive", and "real" at points of the beginning teacher's emotional upset.

Several cited the supportive effects of non-judgement assistance at such times. Some representative comments include: "I've had a shoulder to lean on." "...showed concern for my progress as a teacher. By knowing that she would be there to help me I have felt more confident in my work." "She is very calming and looks at the positive in every situation. This attitude helps me to put things in perspective." "...offers positive encouragement when I feel overwhelmed." "...lets me know I am not alone in my frustrations." "...has provided me with the reassurance that everything would work out and that things would get better." "...gives me a lot of emotional support." "He listens to me and gives advice if I want it."

Providing Information on School Policies and Expectations. In the views of approximately 22 percent of the respondents, it was very valuable to have an EST who helped them to be aware of the explicit and implicit procedures of working and living in the school (and the district) so that the newcomer would feel accepted. Some stressed the importance of completing paperwork properly; others referred to becoming aware of meetings; still others valued help in knowing about the personalities and professional expectations of those who would be evaluating them. One spoke of the feelings of being a stranger in the culture of the new school, and the appreciation for the efforts of the support teacher in "seeing that I fit in within the school structure.

Additional statements on support in this area are: "She has explained the countless forms I need to fill out as well as assisting me when I filled them out incorrectly." "She informed me of the unwritten rules that you're 'supposed' to know." "...has given me an idea of how to interface with the principal and other teachers better." "In the beginning she made me feel like I was part of the system, and included me in on all decisions." "He reminded me of deadlines when I might have forgotten because I had so many new things to think about."

Advising and Coaching for Assessment. Approximately 25 percent of the responding FYTs expressed appreciation for opportunities to observe their ESTs and/or to have their ESTs observe and critique them. In many instances they related these experiences in a positive way to prepare them for their formal assessments (TTAS). More direct coaching by the support teacher for novices' evaluations was valued. Many respondents referred to their ESTs as "models" they wished to emulate.

Specific written comments on this area of value to the responding FYTs include: "She uses the lesson cycle wonderfully. She is also wonderful with children." "She was particularly helpful in advising what is expected of a teacher, and what qualifies for a positive assessment." "She is an excellent teacher, and observing her as she teaches has been very helpful to me." "This has been a great part of my teaching --just knowing that someone is there to point out my good and not so good points." "The most important ways my EST has helped me this year was by coaching me for my first evaluation, on which I made excellent scores. I made 3 E.Q.s." "...lesson critique --helpful hints to improve a lesson."

Evaluating Students and Reporting to Parents. An area of assistance noted as valuable by 15 percent of the respondents related to grading students and reporting to parents. Use of gradebooks to record grades, entries into permanent grade files, exercising fairness in grading, the process of completing report cards, reporting to parents through conferencing, and involving parents in the school appeared to present challenging problems to many new teachers, who reported being helped by their support teachers.

Specific comments in this regard included: "She provided me with information on how to work with report cards." "She helped me to understand the apathy of the few parents who did not pick up their child's report card on time!" "I have recently had some confrontations with parents concerning grades. The reasoning of the parents was unjust, but being a first year teacher, I did not know this. My EST was there by me to lend a very warm and welcoming hand." ". . . made suggestions for open house and conference time." "My EST gave me a guide on how to schedule my parents for fail safe and how to prepare progress reports." "She had given me ideas on getting parents involved." ". . . advice on communicating with parents."

Conclusion. First-year teachers reported a wide range of areas in which they had received help from their ESTs. Overall, most first-year teachers felt that their needs were satisfactorily being met by support teachers. At least one-fourth of them were extremely pleased with the assistance reported. Only a small number felt inadequately supported.

A majority obtained help needed in organizing and managing their classrooms, most specifically in preventing and handling discipline problems. Many especially valued assistance in planning and implementing instruction, as well as opportunities to observe and be observed by their support teachers, who then gave them feedback useful in preparing them for their formal evaluations (TTAS).

The need for emotional support at times of stress and discouragement or simply having someone to lend a "shoulder to lean on" were cited as valued help from ESTs by almost half of the FYTs. One in four indicated receiving needed help by a) being provided with instructional materials, and b) being informed about school and district practices and policies, thereby ensuring that the newcomers would become a part of the school culture as soon as possible.

A smaller, but significant response indicated the need for and value of offered help in evaluation of student progress and the process of reporting to parents.

The disappointment of the small number of FYTs who reported not receiving any support from ESTs, as well as those who felt that they lacked ongoing positive communication with their assigned EST, suggest the need to examine other data that may indicate the underlying reasons for this lack of support.

Teaching Area and FYT Perceptions

The FYTs in this study taught a wide range of subjects in both elementary and secondary schools. We hypothesized that these differences in assignments would lead to different problems and assistance modes. To test this hypothesis, the following research question was posed: **What differences, if any, were there between FYTs who taught academic courses in secondary schools, ancillary courses in secondary schools, special education, bilingual education, and English as a Second Language?**

The study population was divided into five groups by teaching assignment, then for each problem and area of assistance, an ANOVA was calculated. While there were a few statistically significant differences among responses of the groups, there was no pattern to these and the number was about what could have been expected by change. Thus, we concluded that there were no differences in the perceptions of FYTs that could be attributed to teaching assignment.

Recommendations Concerning Experienced Support Teacher Assistance

The fifth research question of this study probed the question, **In what ways did FYTs suggest that ESTs could have been of more assistance during the first two months of school?** In the survey completed in November, FYTs responded to the open-ended question, "In what ways could your support teacher have been of more assistance?" Their responses and suggestions generally related to six areas: general appraisal of EST; organizational constraints of the EST/first-year teacher assignment; personal qualities and actions of ESTs; support through ideas and materials; observation/feedback on teaching; and information on school.

General Appraisal of Experienced Support Teacher.

Some of the written statements indicated general perceptions of the experienced support teacher's assistance. Nearly 4 in 10 (38 percent) indicated the EST is doing all that could be expected. When they elaborated on this appraisal, their comments were laudatory. "This woman is Fabulous! ! ! I feel that not only do I have a EST, but that I have also made a friend." "My EST has done everything to help me. I would have been lost without her assistance."

Others were less positive and some were negative, feeling the EST had not assisted them. Some reasons listed included lack of time, the EST's family obligations and personal needs, and the EST's own classroom responsibilities. These are discussed in greater detail later in this section. To have been of more assistance, one wrote, my EST "could have done her job."

Another wrote, "My EST has been very negative toward me. I feel that her 'thing' is to put down just about everything I do and ignore and/or discredit my positive accomplishments. I try to have as little contact with her as possible. I understand from other teachers who had her as a EST in previous years, that this is her usual way of 'assisting.' She could be of greater assistance if she quit the EST program."

One first-year teacher felt the EST "was not sure of her obligation to me." Finally, in response to this question, one first-year teacher suggested: "Come home with me and cook! ! ! (just joking)."

Organizational Constraints of the EST/FYT Assignment. **ESTs should teach in the same grade level, subject, or special assignment such as ESL.** Congruence of assignment was the most often mentioned recommendation of first-year teachers. When teaching assignments were different, ESTs were not able to help with lesson plans, materials, or provide specific feedback needed. Many of the recommendations of first-year teachers were fermented from this problem.

The classrooms of ESTs and FYTs should be in close proximity. This recommendation was also strongly recommended by first-year teachers, particularly those whose rooms are located in a different area of the school campus from their ESTs. Such situations lead to a lack of contact and communication with the EST.

Regular times when FYTs and ESTs meet should be scheduled at least weekly. The key is regular and scheduled; when there was not such an arrangement, the professional helping relationship was adversely affected. Several first-year teachers recommended a half-hour each week, with opportunities for additional assistance in time of specific need. "It would be helpful if our conflicting schedules allowed for more time to get together--for observations and for planning time." First-year teachers recommended having the same planning period, recess or lunch time, or time after school. Several noted, however, that after school was difficult for their ESTs because of family responsibilities, personal business, or medical problems.

Personal Qualities and Actions of ESTs. Strengthening five personal characteristics and actions would improve EST assistance, according to first-year teachers. First, **The EST should take the responsibility seriously.** Several FYTs indicated the lack of commitment by their ESTs was a serious problem. Some ESTs were assigned to this role, did not know about it until school began, or did not wish to contribute to or be concerned with a FYT's problems and concerns. Some avoided contact with FYTs, according to FYTs, and others did not assist them at all. One wrote, "She could have come to my room when she said she would."

The EST should devote time to work with first-year teachers, and be readily available. Particularly at the beginning of school when the FYT is new and needs so much support, the EST needs to spend more time in their classrooms, in conferences, and in sharing materials. One wrote, "She could have been of assistance during the days before school started and the first few weeks of school."

The EST should be proactive in the relationship. First-year teachers would like ESTs to ask if the FYT needed help, to come to the FYT's classroom to talk, not to wait for the FYT to ask, and to share good ideas and complements without having to ask. Frustration can be read into this response: "I felt that help and assistance could have been offered to me earlier after my first few failures. As an experienced teacher, it appeared as if she didn't understand where I was. It was second nature to her but foreign to me. Also, I always had to go and ask her for whatever I needed. She never came in and asked if I needed anything or any help or simply checked to see how I was doing. Nothing was offered to me of her vast wealth of ides and knowledge of what she says that I might need."

The EST should listen. "A listening ear would be helpful and some feedback on problems I'm having. I rarely see her and she comes late and leaves right after school so we never have time to chat. I don't feel she is making an effort to see how I am doing." "She's very busy herself and sometimes I just need to talk to a sympathetic ear--she's not always very eager to listen. She's been there--she understands, but I sometimes don't talk to her but to other teachers who do help me."

The ESTs should be supportive. First-year teachers are cognizant of their status and somewhat sensitive. They would like ESTs to help them become part of the school, to be their advocate, and to be receptive of their ideas. One FYT wrote, "Remember we are brand new and don't know anything." This recommendation applies also to the school district: two FYTs wrote that their ESTs should be "less critical of a system I am new to."

Support Through Ideas and Materials. ESTs should share specific ideas and instructional materials with their first-year teachers. Several suggested that collaborative planning would be helpful. Some ideas and materials that first-year teachers mentioned include: ideas for (a) classroom activities, especially seasonal ones; (b) grading papers and recording grades; (c) what content to teach; (d) time management; (e) tests; (f) art projects; (g) individual work; (h) room arrangements; (i) how to work on report cards; (j) new strategies and techniques; and (k) "just generally how to get sensibly organized."

First-year teachers recognized the paucity of their teaching materials and resources, were appreciative when ESTs shared these, and indicated that one way for ESTs to be more helpful would be to lend the FYT more teaching aids and resources. Several FYTs were concerned that their ESTs were not open or willing to share either ideas or resources (e.g., bulletin board ideas, charts, pictures). Several want to know what materials are necessary for their grade level or subject area, and where to obtain them.

Observation/feedback on Teaching. First-year teachers mentioned instructional needs more often than others. Their recommendations centered around four ideas. One FYT summarized their general recommendations: "I would like to discuss lesson plans and lesson development/presentation, specific classroom organization and management strategies."

The EST should assist FYTs in writing lesson plans, particularly when planning for a week. One echoed the feelings expressed by nearly ten percent of the FYTs: " I would have liked to plan lessons together for the first six weeks to make sure I was on the right track." They do not know what t expect of their pupils, where to go for resources, how to vary lessons or make them interesting to pupils, and what is expected by the school district in the way of written lesson plans. FYTs spend considerable time and emotional energy on lesson plans; one wanted to know "how to use the Project Access book and the PLM kit; took me hours on one weekend to figure it out."

Observing the EST who is modeling outstanding instruction is important to FYTs. First-year teachers wanted to be able to observe their ESTs more often, and to discuss the lessons afterward. Demonstration lessons, particularly those using manipulatives, group work, organizing the class for individual work combined with small groups were mentioned as important. "I would have liked to have seen some lessons by my EST which would have been master teacher caliber. Many of the lessons seemed to be spur of the moment and not well prepared; therefore, I was not getting lots of the great ideas that would motivate and stimulate me to aspire to higher heights."

ESTs should observe the FYT more often, and provide constructive feedback. Almost one FYT in twelve indicated this as an important way of strengthening their teaching. Constructive critiques by their ESTs, specific feedback, and specific ideas for lessons and concrete advice were ways ESTs could be of greater assistance.

The EST should assist the FYT design and develop good classroom management and effective discipline. This recommendation is exemplified in a number of more specific suggestions throughout the responses to this question (e.g., knowledge of school procedures and policies, planning for the first few weeks of school). and in the need for closer and more regular contacts with ESTs.

Information on School. **The EST should help the first-year teacher become familiar with school rules and procedures.** Most principals and administrators assume this responsibility, but their interpretations often lack the specificity needed in a particular grade level or subject area. Further, the perspective of administrators is different from that of teachers who are implementing procedures. FYTs often are concerned about asking questions of administrators at this stage of their careers.

Understanding the school and school district, complying with the myriad details that teachers must handle, and working within school district parameters were areas in which ESTs could have been more helpful. One first-year teacher put it this way, "In the quotidian details of survival in the school and in HISD, [I need assistance in] how to obtain what we need to teach, operation of schedules, school procedures, HISD procedures."

Some of the regulations, procedures, and events that FYTs mentioned as needing greater detail and further elaboration include (a) open house preparation; (b) Fail Safe; (c) when to take students to lunch; (d) how to refer a student; (e) ordering media equipment; (f) school routines; (g) discipline rules; (h) obtaining blank forms; (i) taking and keeping roll; and (j) dates and times reports are due. FYTs want to be able to talk with their ESTs, and more important, to have their ESTs volunteer information on "school expectations, how to do things, where things are, procedural requirements (i. e., keep all lesson plans, turn in picture money at certain time to office, who's responsible for what, when to send out progress notices, how to complete such reports)."

Particularly important to several was information on unwritten school policies; experienced teachers seemed to know them, as well as students. FYTs find them by taking action only to find it violated a cherished unwritten rule.

Conclusion. First-year teachers were generally pleased with the assistance received from their ESTs. Nearly 40 percent believe their EST is doing all they need to do. The recommendations of another 35 percent suggest general positive perceptions, but identify some ways that assistance could be improved. Finally, the responses to this question by about one-fourth of the FYTs indicate moderate to intense concern for the effectiveness of their EST. Some express disdain for their EST, others suggest a personality conflict, and some reflect a withdrawal of interaction.

Recommendations for improving EST assistance, when combined with the responses to other open-ended questions and analyses of objective questions, suggest some ways in which EST service could be strengthened.

Other Support For First-Year Teachers

The support provided to first-year teachers was not limited to the specific ESTs to whom they were assigned. The principal, other administrators, teachers, the professional development specialist (a person in each of the 14 HISD districts assigned to work with FYTs) were helpful to these first-year teachers. The sixth research question of the study was **To what extent and in what ways were persons other than the ESTs helpful to FYTs? To what extent did Professional Development Specialists work with individual FYTs?**

Three questions were asked to determine the effectiveness and extensiveness of this support. The first question asked about the nature and extent of assistance by persons other than the EST, while the second probed the extent of contact with the professional development specialist. The third question asked first-year teachers to suggest ways support by others could have been improved.

Nature and Extent of Support by Persons Other Than Experienced Support Teachers

First-year teachers are helped by a wide range of persons both in and outside the school district. FYT were asked to identify incidents in which others had worked with them in the two-week period preceding the survey. We not only were interested in with whom they had worked, but the extensiveness of the contact who initiated the contact, how important the problem area was that was considered, and how effective the FYT perceived the assistance to be. Their responses to this question are summarized in this section.

First-year teachers charted information on the ways in which people other than their assigned support teachers were of assistance to them over a two-week period. The areas of support reported by FYTs, ordered according to the number of incidents in each area, included: 1) sharing materials, equipment and ideas; 2) advising on classroom management and organization; 3) working together in a general way such as attendance at meetings at which "many things were discussed"; 4) helping plan for and deliver instruction; 5) explaining policies, procedures and expectations of the district and the school; 6) offering emotional support; 7) assisting with student evaluation and reporting to parents; 8) preparing for assessment; 9) assisting directly in teaching students in the classroom.

Table 9 includes for each of the support areas: the percentage of FYTs reporting assistance in that area; maximum and median time spent on assistance in that area; percentages of times the contacts were initiated by the first-year teacher (FYT), the other person (OTR) or mutually (BTH); degree to which the problem was perceived to be important to the FYT (on a scale of 1 - 5 with 5 being "very important"); and the degree to which the contact was perceived to have been effective by the FYT (on a scale of 1 - 5 with 5 being "very effective"). Assistance was provided by a wide range of persons, including teachers on the faculty other than the assigned EST, principal, professional development specialist, grade level or department chairperson, counselors, vice-principal, secretaries, aides, parents, nurses, dean of students, substitute teachers, district supervisor, librarians, and relatives or friends.

Table 9: Support Provided First-Year Teachers
By Persons Other Than Experienced Support Teacher

Area of Support	% of FYT Reprtng Area	Max Time (hrs)	Median Time (hrs)	% Initiated By				Importance of Problem		Effective of Cntact	
				FYT	OTR	BTH	NI	R=5	R=1	R=5	R=1
Sharing Materials	35	8.33	.92	45	36	17	2	62	6	78	2
Classroom Management, Organization	30	48.58	1.00	54	34	10	2	78	0	68	6
General Assistance (e.g., meetings)	28	6.16	3.00	28	28	28	16	64	0	62	0
Planning, Delivering Instruction	28	10.25	1.00	30	45	22	3	87	0	83	0
Policies. Procedures, Expectations	15	2.08	.42	38	0	59	3	83	0	83	0
Emotional Support	13	6.25	.50	45	36	14	5	64	0	64	0
Student Evaluation, Reporting to Parents	6	2.16	.50	70	30	0		80	0	80	0
Preparing for Assessment	5	2.16	.87	44	11	44		89	0	89	0
Direct Teaching of Students	1	6.00	4.50	100	0	0		100	0	100	0

Of the 268 incidents of assistance by those other than the assigned support teacher, 40 percent involved those identified only as "other", 43 percent involved teachers other than the EST, 8 percent involved the principal, 5 percent involved the Professional Development Specialist, 3 percent involved the grade level or department chairperson, and less than 1 percent involved counselors, vice-principals, aides, secretaries, nurses, parents, dean of students, substitute teachers, district supervisors, and relatives or friends.

Several findings can be elicited from these data. First, for 40 percent of the assistance during this two-week period, FYTs did not identify the source other than "other person." Thus the extensiveness of support by persons other than the EST are under estimated. However, the major source of assistance, other than the assigned EST, is other teachers in the school. In most areas, the FYT initiated more requests for assistance than the "other person." These two findings together suggest that others are willing to assist FYTs even though not specifically assigned as an EST, that their assistance is valued by FYTs, and that FYTs feel comfortable in requesting such assistance.

Second, the greatest number of incidents of assistance by those other than ESTs were in the areas of sharing materials (35%), classroom management and organization (30%), general assistance (28%), and planning and delivering instruction (28%). These are the same areas to which FYTs consulted with their ESTs.

Third, Not only were the problems that other persons worked with FYTs on considered very important, the effectiveness of their assistance was rated as very effective.

Fourth, in seven of the nine areas of assistance reported by FYTs, 8 - 10 percent of the source of help was the principal. The significance of this finding for the program is important; how the principal views his/her role in assisting the FYT is vital and needs to be explored.

In summary, the answers to this question suggest that first-year teachers need, value and utilize the support and assistance of many different individuals in the school setting and that their acknowledged (in answers to other questions of this study) appreciation of their assigned support teacher does not preclude the importance of the contributions of these "others" to their induction into the profession of teaching.

Professional Development Specialist Support

The school district assigned a Professional Development Specialist to work with FYTs in each of the 14 districts in HISD. Their case load ranged from about three dozen beginning teachers to over one hundred. Each was officed in the district's central offices, and visited schools and teachers. Two questions in the survey probed the extent of their contact with FYTs. The first question asked the extent of time the PDS had worked individually with the FYT during the previous two months, while the second inquired about contacts in group settings. These data are included in Table 10.

Table 10: Extensiveness of Professional Development Specialist Contact with FYTs Individually and in Group Settings

Extent of Contact	Frequency	Percent
Individual Contact		
None	45	15
1 hour	104	35
2-5 hours	119	40
6-10 hours	16	5
More than 10 hrs	11	4
Group Setting		
None	80	28
1-5 hours	139	48
6-10 hours	28	10
11-20 hours	16	6
More than 20 hrs	28	10

Three-fourths (75%) of FYTs worked individually with professional development specialists from 1 to 5 hours, and 9 percent more than 6 hours. Only 15 percent reported no individual contact with a PDS.

Nearly half of the FYTs worked with PDSs for from 1-5 hours in group settings, and 10 percent for more than 20 hours during the two-month period. These likely were in some of the seminars arranged for FYTs to learn more about teaching. Twenty-eight percent (28%), however, did not work with a PDS in any group setting.

Recommendations for Additional Support

First-year teachers responded to an open-ended request that they suggest additional support that could have been helpful to them. Their responses in this regard can be categorized as those relating to these seven areas: more extensive general support; organizational changes; greater provision of materials; more opportunities for modeling and critiquing of instruction and management; greater emotional support; more advice on teacher/parent relationships and student evaluation; and more guidance on administrative expectations and requirements.

General Support. Although six percent of respondents reported having "more than enough help", 20 percent expressed a need for a broader base of active support; for example, "I need...more support from my principal. I haven't had any personal feedback from her." Another respondent wanted "a support group of other teachers - rap groups to share ideas and problems." Another wished for "cooperation of the chairperson from my grade level. She has ignored me and allowed me to suffer book shortages which the other teachers were not subjected to."

More general support would be forthcoming, suggested one beginning teacher, if "there was a real openness among teachers at our school about discipline in their classes. I feel they are very closed in sharing some of their discipline problems and how to deal with them. It is as if they don't want to 'reveal' any problems they may be having." Promoting more openness in the school climate appeared in the responses in relation to other specific areas of need as well (e.g., emotional support, materials).

A general sense of having to ask for help or information rather than having it freely offered was seen by some as inadequate help. These respondents who, as expressed by one "needed to know something . . . found out the information from someone . . . but still wonder what I may be missing and not even know it." This suggests that more careful and systematic efforts to ensure newcomers' being informed would help.

On the other hand, one respondent recognized that the support system is very well in place, but that "the only problem I had was in remembering that it was there and using it to my best advantage. Once I started using the resources available (my EST, my team members, team leader, and the advice of other people at the school) the situation began improving."

Organizational Changes. The highest percentage of responses (27%) to this question called for organizational changes that would be more supportive of beginning teachers. Many had to do with the need for more official allocation of time for FYTs and ESTs to meet and work together. In some cases, all that was asked for was having the same planning time; but many respondents expressed the need for more time, "before school begins."

Several respondents spoke of the help it would be to have more money, "higher salaries would relieve financial stress of first-year teachers," "more discretionary funds to purchase supplies and materials urgently needed for teaching," and in the words of a particularly angry first-year teacher, "someone to come into my classroom to ask what I needed, then to go out and get it for me. After practically getting on knees for a ream of paper, or paper towels, I become furious at the fortune being spent on people who enter my classroom specifically to judge me and do not lift a finger to help a child in my room to learn . . . . One hour of their time would probably pay for all the ditto paper I will need this year."

Other organizational changes seen as potentially offering more support include smaller class sizes for first-year teachers, formal assignment of clerical workers, teacher aides and volunteers to assist in a variety of ways, established limits to out-of-class responsibilities given to ESTs as well as FYTs, and reduction of paperwork as much as possible for first-year teachers.

Several FYTs saw greater potential support if there were, as one said, "clearly established guidelines and training for the ESTs before they begin working with first-year teachers," and a mechanism for help if an EST is not supportive: "Someone should be willing to pick up the slack if an EST teacher is just not doing the job." Finally, one response related to the support that would be inherent in the FYT having a choice of placement: "Not being placed at ___ would have been helpful."

Greater Provision of Materials. One out of five FYTs would have been helped significantly by "provision of teachers' editions and curriculum guides as early as possible," "clear information as to sources and places of supplies," and the "allowance of time to learn to use materials."

More specific desired support, in the FYTs' own words: "I could have used more books at the beginning of the year, I felt a need for a reading book in Spanish based on material covered which the kids could take home and study." "Pencils, paper, tables . . . " "Kits which can be used over and over in the class to give them more 'hands on' experience." "Overhead projector, cassette player." "Earlier access to the Media Center" and "someone to help you the first time you go there."

Many beginning teachers were concerned with the expense of purchasing needed materials: "It's very expensive and time consuming to come up with all the necessary resources needed for effective teaching. It takes a while and a lot of expense to acquire these materials." And another, "I think that it is absolutely ridiculous that teachers are not provided with teaching tools and should have to scrounge to get them."

More Modeling and Critiquing of Instruction and Management. In the views of 27 percent of the FYTs, more support would be forthcoming if there were greater opportunities for them to observe their ESTs modeling good practices, and for these ESTs to observe and critique FYTs instructing and managing. It was felt that early informed observations by administrators and/or counselors would be helpful and that, in some cases, observation and coaching by teachers in special areas related to the FYT's assignment, such as ESL and Chapter I, would strengthen the support system.

Many responses related requests in the area of observations (both ways) to helping them to prepare for their formal assessments as well as to improve their teaching generally: "I need more constructive criticism from my principal and others." "if first-year teachers could observe actual teaching settings on video cassettes." "There should be required reviewing of lesson plans and required time spent in each other's classes." "need to observe how experienced teachers apply Project Access to their teaching."

Greater Emotional Support. Although only 9 percent felt that greater emotional support by others was needed. One cited being "undermined by the inconsistency of my principal, blowing hot and cold in her attitude to me;" several others still needed"someone to take time just to listen." The rejection of colleagues who "really do not want to share their ideas, etc. with me" was undermining.

One element of possible increased emotional support expressed by several respondents was for colleagues to show respect and acceptance for alternative certification teachers. It would help, one suggested to "talk with experienced teachers and explain to them what ACP is all about so they won't act like everything is a big secret...example, if a new ACP teacher asks for some type of information, only the bare minimum is given as if we were going to take their jobs."

More Advice on Teacher/parent Relationships and Student Evaluation. A small number (6 percent) of FYTs would have been better supported if given more guidance in working with parents and with the student evaluation process that some saw as related skills. One would have been helped by "more emphasis on evaluating students' past academic performance on tests" and another needed to construct "an inventory test to see the students' level."

More Guidance on Administrative Expectations and Requirements. New teachers feel greater supported when they are surer of what is expected of them in all areas of the school program, inside and outside the classroom. Approximately 16 percent of those responding expressed the need for greater specificity of expectations and requirements of their administration for them to feel better supported. One needed to "know more details of . . . what was going on." Even an "orientation to the school building" would have been supportive to another. In the words of a third, support would have been enhanced by knowing "things I need to do as required by administration." A call for more support in this area came from one respondent who asked for "one packet on how to complete all the paperwork and a list of complete principal expectations, procedures, etc. I'm terrified to approach my principal because she always says to come to her; whereas, other teachers tell me to stay away from her."

Conclusion. Most respondents had suggestions for improved ways of supporting them during the first year of teaching. One in five respondents was looking for a broader base of support than that offered by the assigned ESTs (such as participation in a new teacher support group). Perhaps most significant was the request for support prior to the beginning of the school year.

Almost one in five indicated that more support was needed by providing adequate materials and equipment, and by providing to them curriculum guides and teachers' editions as soon as possible after they were employed. Greater knowledge about administrative expectations was desired by a minority of FYTs; and a small number would have felt more supported by more guidance in student evaluation.

It is perhaps important to note that 91 percent of the FYTs did not mention needing additional emotional support. Of those who did feel a need for increased emotional support, it was ACP first-year teachers who were quite specific about needing more respect and acceptance.

Perceived Outcomes of the Support System

Several questions probed FYTs' perception of confidence and satisfaction as teachers and their future plans. Two of the research questions guided these survey questions: **7. To what extent did FYTs feel confident and satisfied after two months of school? 8. What vocational plans did FYTs have after two months of teaching?**

Table 11: FYT Confidence, Satisfaction, and Future Plans

	Frequency	Percent
Confidence as a Teacher		
Not at all confident as a teacher	2	1
Some problems, but generally coping	74	25
As good as most first-year teachers	44	15
Confident as a teacher	99	34
Very confident, an effective teacher	76	26
Satisfied as a Teacher		
Not at all satisfied	5	2
Not satisfied	26	9
Neutral	58	20
Satisfied	146	48
Very satisfied	59	20
Continuing to Teach		
Probably my last year in HISD	12	4
Probably my last year to teach	5	2
Probably teach no more than 5 years	59	20
Probably stay in educ throughout career	215	73
Plans In Five Years		
Teaching	170	58
Educational specialist	63	21
School Administrator	38	13
Employed outside education	17	6
Temporarily/permanently out of work force	6	2

Three-fourths (75%) of FYTs are as confident as most first-year teachers, and 60 percent are quite confident. One-fourth of them, however, are having problems but generally coping. In terms of their satisfaction, 68 percent are satisfied or very satisfied, 20 percent neutral, and 11 percent dissatisfied.

Three-fourths (73%) of FYTs plan to remain in education throughout their lives and another 20 percent for less than five years. More than half (58%) plan to continue teaching while 34 percent plan to move into administrative or supervisory roles within the next five years. Only 8 percent do not plan to be teaching in five years.

Conclusions and Recommendations

First-year teachers made a number of recommendations for ESTs and for policy makers that have relevance for those responsible for organizing support programs for beginning teachers. Several conclusions can also be drawn from the information.

Conclusions

When the data in this report of FYT perceptions are synthesized, several conclusions can be drawn.

1. FYTs are generally confident, satisfied, and plan to remain in teaching. Three-fourths of FYTs are as confident as most first-year teachers, and 60 percent are quite confident. One-fourth are having problems but generally coping as a teacher. More than two-thirds are satisfied or very satisfied as teachers, and 11 percent are dissatisfied.

Three-fourths plan to remain in education throughout their career, and another 20 percent plan to teach for less than five years. Only 4 percent indicated they probably would not teach next year in HISD, and another 2 percent not teach anywhere. Eight percent do not plan to be teaching in five years.

2. ESTs are generally effective in assisting FYTs. Over three-fourths (77%) of ESTs were rated as supportive to outstanding by their FYTs, and another 18 percent a lukewarm "somewhat helpful;" 6 percent of ESTs, however, did not assist FYTs at all. One-fourth of ESTs (24%) were judged ineffective as coaches, with one-fourth (23%) rated adequate coaches and half (53%) effective or very effective.

3. Professional Development specialists spend considerable time individually and in groups with FYTs (about 4 hours in individual contact and 5 hours in group settings with each FYT). However, 15 percent of FYTs had no individual contact with PDSs and 28 percent had none in group settings.

4. EST and FYT assignment to the same grade level or subject areas facilitated assistance.

5. ESTs provided the greatest support in the following areas: Sharing materials; planning and delivering instruction; organizing and managing the classroom; preparing for student and teacher assessment; providing emotional support; providing information on school policies and expectations; and evaluating students and reporting to parents

6. Emotional support of ESTs was vital to FYTs.

7. Persons other than ESTs assisted FYTs, and FYTs need, value, and use their support. The school principal was particularly key to this.

8. Teaching assignment was not a factor in the severity of problems, extensiveness of assistance, or feelings of satisfaction or confidence among FYTs.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Several recommendations from FYTs are relevant to policy makers implementing the support program.

1. Carefully screen ESTs before assigning to FYTs.

2. Develop ways to decrease paperwork which FYTs are expected to complete, reexamine the distribution of materials and equipment, and provide opportunities for FYTs to receive counseling on personal finances. First-year teachers experienced three major problems during the first two months of school: (a) the overwhelming amount of paperwork, for which they were not prepared; (b) lack of personal time; and (c) lack of adequate materials and equipment. EST assistance with the first two problems was less extensive than FYTs needed, probably because the solutions to problems were not in their domain. ESTs also were not able, nor were they typically called upon to provide counseling with personal financial problems.

3. Provide adequate supplies, materials, and equipment to teachers, particularly FYTs. Establish a process in each school so teachers can learn how to secure needed resources. Provide teachers editions of textbooks and curriculum guides before school begins to FYTs. A significant number of FYTs complained about the expense of purchasing supplies from their own pockets.

4. Assign ESTs who teach in the same grade level, subject, or special assignment as the FYTs. Schedule conference periods, lunch periods, etc. so as to provide more time for ESTs and FYTs to work together and to observe each other teach.

5. Provide training for ESTs prior to their assignment.

Recommendations for Experienced Support Teachers

FYTs made a number of recommendations that would improve the support services of ESTs.

ESTs should:

1. Have regular scheduled meetings at least weekly with their FYTs.

2. Be proactive in the relationship, offering assistance rather than waiting to be asked.

3. Listen and be supportive.

4. Share specific ideas and instructional materials with FYTs.

5. Assist FYTs in writing lesson plans, particularly long-range plans.

6. Observe FYTs often and regularly, and provide constructive feedback.

7. Assist the FYT in designing and implementing good classroom management processes and effective discipline.

8. Help FYTs to become familiar with school rules, policies, and procedures. FYTs are particularly sensitive to the expectations of administrators, and need greater details relative to expectations.

STUDY 90-03

PERCEPTIONS OF EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHERS OF THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

W. Robert Houston
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This study explores several questions related to the improvement of support programs for first-year teachers. The perceptions of experienced support teachers provides interesting insights into the program. Each had been teaching for a number of years, each was considered an effective teacher by the administration, and each had agreed to work with a first-year teacher.

The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. The present study analyzes the perceptions of experienced support teachers after having worked with first-year teachers for two months. The specific questions that directed this study include:

1. What were the major problems of first-year teachers (FYTs) during the first two months of school as perceived by their experienced support teachers?
2. To what extent did ESTs perceive they had been of assistance to FYTs in solving these problems?
3. To what extent and in what areas did ESTs perceive they had assisted FYTs? What problems were addressed, how much time was devoted to their solution, who initiated the contact, and how important was the problem?
4. In what ways did ESTs perceive they could have been of greater assistance in the first two months of school?

Characteristics and Teaching Assignments of Experienced Support Teachers

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the demographic characteristics of experienced support teachers. Their gender, marital status, ethnicity, and teaching assignments are included in the first table while the nature of their teaching assignment is included in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Experienced Support Teachers

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	26	12
Female	198	88
Age		
21-25	3	1
26-30	24	10
31-35	33	14
36-40	40	17
41-45	29	12
46-50	32	14
51-55	19	8
56-60	15	6
60+	6	3
Not indicated	32	14
Marital Status		
Single	47	20
Married	144	63
Divorced	39	17
Racial or Ethnic Identification		
Black, not of Hispanic origin	85	37
Hispanic	44	19
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	1
White, not of Hispanic origin	98	43

Experienced support teachers were primarily women (88% female), and their mean age was 41.46 with a S.D. of 10.70 years. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the ESTs were married, the remainder either single or divorced. Forty-three percent (43%) were White, 37 percent Black, and 19 percent Hispanic.

Table 2: Teaching Assignments of
Experienced Support Teachers

	Frequency	Percent
Level		
Preschool-Grade 3	118	52
Elementary Grades 4-6	51	22
Middle School/Jr. High	34	15
Senior High School	25	11
Content Field		
Secondary Academic Subjects	55	24
Secondary Ancillary Subj(band, P.E.,Voc.)	8	3
Bilingual Education	39	17
Special Education	8	3
English as a Second Language	24	10

About three-fourths of ESTs (74%) taught in elementary schools, with 52 percent of the ESTs teaching in the primary grades. Almost all of the secondary teachers were teaching academic subjects. Seventeen percent (17%) taught bilingual education and 10 percent English as a second language classes.

Major Problems of First-year Teachers

The first question explored in this study was: **What were the major problems of first-year teachers during the first two months of school as perceived by their experienced support teachers?** A series of problems were included in the survey and experienced support teachers were asked to rate each of them as: a major problem (5), a problem (3), or not a problem (1) for their FYT. The mean ratings of these problems are included in Table 3.

Table 3: Problems of First-Year Teachers as Perceived by Experienced Support Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	2.61	1.50	2
Student Motivation	2.12	1.31	6.5
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.23	1.49	5
Personal Financial Problems	1.87	1.31	10
Managing Teacher Time	2.54	1.35	3
Parent Cooperation	2.12	1.29	6.5
Amount of Paperwork	3.20	1.49	1
School Administration	1.48	1.06	13
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.59	1.10	12
Lack of Personal Time	2.41	1.41	4
Student Involvement	2.07	1.25	8
Burn-out	1.81	1.22	11
Peer Acceptance	1.24	.76	14
Grading Students	1.93	1.24	9

ESTs believed the major single problem of FYTs was the amount of paperwork (M = 3.20). Managing the classroom was second (M = 2.61) and managing teacher time third (M = 2.54). Not generally perceived as problems were peer acceptance (M = 1.24), school administration (M = 1.48), and lack of teaching freedom (M = 1.59).

Experienced Support Teacher Assistance In Solving FYT Problems

To what extent did experienced support teachers perceive they had been helpful in solving these problems? ESTs were asked to respond to these same problem areas using the scale: Greatly assisted the FYT (5); Of some assistance (3); or Of no assistance (1). Table 4 includes mean ratings for experienced support teachers in each of the ten teaching assignments of first-year teachers.

Table 4: Support by ESTs in Solving Problems of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	3.33	1.15	1
Student Motivation	2.95	1.09	2
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.83	1.35	4.5
Personal Financial Problems	1.45	1.04	14
Managing Teacher Time	2.87	1.13	3
Parent Cooperation	2.40	1.17	10
Amount of Paperwork	2.83	1.30	4.5
School Administration	2.63	1.35	8
Lack of Teaching Freedom	2.59	1.31	9
Lack of Personal Time	2.35	1.28	11
Student Involvement	2.75	1.17	7
Burn-out	2.34	1.33	12
Peer Acceptance	2.09	1.31	13
Grading Students	2.78	1.18	6

The problem with which ESTs perceived they were of most assistance to FYTs was in managing the classroom (M = 3.33). This was the only area with a mean greater than 3.00, Of some assistance. Student motivation (M = 2.95) and managing teacher time (M = 2.87) were second and third in EST perception of their support of FYTs. Lack of adequate materials and amount of paperwork tied for the 4.5 rank (M = 2.83). ESTs perceived they provided least assistance with personal financial problems (M = 1.45). Peer acceptance was also not a problem area with which ESTs assisted FYTs.

Ways in Which Experienced Support Teachers Work With First-Year Teachers

The third question explored in this study was **To what extent and in what areas did ESTs perceive they had assisted FYTs? What problems were addressed, how much time was devoted to their solution, who initiated the contact, and how important was the problem?**

Because of the importance of this question, ESTs were asked to respond in three ways. First, they were asked to rate their assistance in ten areas. Second, they were asked in an open-ended question to list the most important ways they had helped their first-year teachers since the beginning of school. Third, they were asked to list incidents in which they had worked with FYTs during the preceding two-week period. For each incident, ESTs were asked to indicate the time spent, who initiated the contact, how important the problem area was to the FYT, and how effective the assistance was. Their responses to these three questions are summarized in this section of the report.

Assistance in Specified Areas

A number of areas have been identified as ones in which experienced support teachers have helped first-year teachers. Table 5 summarizes data on the extent to which ESTs perceived their assistance was helpful. They used the following scale in assessing their support: Greatly assisted FYT (5); Of some assistance (3); or Of no assistance (1). Mean ratings, standard deviations and ranks for each area of assistance are included.

Table 5: Extent of Assistance to FYTs
As Perceived by Experienced Support Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Systems Information	4.12	1.18	1
Mustering Resources	3.68	1.22	5
Instructional Information	3.97	1.24	3
Emotional Support	4.03	1.25	2
Advice on Student Management	3.81	1.28	4
Advice on Scheduling and Planning	3.51	1.28	6
Help with the Classroom Environment	3.03	1.42	10
Demonstration Teaching	3.43	1.61	8
Coaching	3.48	1.44	7
Advice on Working with Parents	3.05	1.35	9

From Odell, S. J. Developing support programs for beginning teachers. In L. Huling-Austin et al. Assisting the Beginning Teacher (p. 31). Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

The extensiveness of assistance in the areas included in Table 5 were rated greater by ESTs than problem areas. For example, in assistance with problems, only one area had a mean rating of 3.00 or greater, while all of the means in Table 5 were greater than 3.00 and two were greater than 4.00.

Areas of greatest assistance were systems information (M = 4.12), emotional support (M = 4.03), and instructional information (M = 3.97). ESTs felt they were of least assistance in helping with the classroom environment (M = 3.03) and advice on working with parents (M = 3.05).

Assistance Provided During the Year

In responses to an open-ended question, experienced support teachers described the most important ways they had helped their FYTs since school began. The support they provided, in order of number of incidents, can be categorized as eight areas: general availability of assistance; managing and organizing the classroom; planning and implementing instruction; providing emotional support; coaching through observations by and of the support teacher (with special reference to the TTAS); explaining school and district policies, procedures, expectations, and the general culture of the system; sharing, procuring and locating materials and equipment; and evaluating students and reporting to parents.

General Availability of Assistance. One out of five support teachers reported either meeting regularly once a day or several times a week. Many indicated being available whenever needed. Wrote one, "I have opened my door to her, and continually offer my help."

Awareness of the special needs of beginning teachers and the role of the support teacher in meeting those needs was expressed by many of the respondents, such as the one who wrote, "Knowing someone in a new school, let alone such a large school as ours, is very important. I believe I was of help in being able to introduce her to others. Those first days of chaos and the inundation of information is overwhelming, as well as thinking of meeting and preparing for one's students. Having someone there to talk with, to see, to get advice from, to review and explain the paperwork is very important. Everyone needs a resource person or just a shoulder to cry on when all seems too demanding."

Another spoke of "trying to anticipate needs before they arise." And still another, "I think just being a sounding board on which to bounce ideas and get feedback has been most essential." There was also evidence in the responses that support teachers made themselves available by telephone in the evenings, and for meetings on the weekends, although this was not widely reported.

A few instances of frustrated attempts to assist beginning teachers were cited, such as the support teacher whose "suggestions given were met with a negative response and four to five reasons why they wouldn't work. These were ideas that other teachers and myself have used for years! . . . A good rapport was never established."

Managing and Organizing the Classroom. Almost 50 percent of the support teachers responding regarded helping novice teachers to establish and maintain good management and organization in their classrooms as essential to their role. In some cases this was expressed in general terms such as, "how to work with students who have discipline problems", or, in the words of another, "the best way to avoid students getting out of hand."

Other support teachers were very specific about the assistance they were offering in this area. Sample quotations follow:

> "I gave her ideas on how to establish routines in the classroom like how to do the calendar, how to have a specific place to put their papers when they are finished, how to keep the students in line when they go to the bathroom, how to let them know that they must keep their eyes on the teacher when she is teaching the whole class."

> "Upon showing her to her room, I was able to help her get her room ready (bulletin boards, centers. etc.) and familiarize her with the school's rules that she must teach her children to follow."

> "I helped her fit together all the subjects, planning times, recess and lunch times and organize the program into a workable, simplified manner."

> "I have suggested a system to help problem students and all students by being clear on rules; organizing reinforcements for good behavior and being consistent with discipline. I have given her examples of behavior charts and contracts she can use with the more severe problems."

Planning and Implementing Instruction. Another significant area of assistance, as cited by approximately 50 percent of the experienced support teachers (ESTs), was the planning and implementation of instruction, including "help with project access;" "showing him how to have students work together in pairs or small groups;" "giving Nancy tips on how to keep students on task such as ...;" "how to motivate slower students by using flashcards with only a few vocabulary words and to play different games with the words, so that they may be able to read a short sentence and feel successful." Indeed, a plethora of detailed help in this area was described.

Some ESTs described helping novices in writing lesson plans, especially early in the year. Others cited a concern that their first-year teachers be clear about curriculum mandates and about planning to "prepare students for the TEAMS tests."

Other ESTs indicated helping beginning teachers in planning for individual needs of students as in the case of one who recognized that "K. tend to be unrealistic about goals; I have talked with him extensively regarding setting goals that are obtainable by the students." Another wrote of helping his first-year teacher to "introduce modification for special students in his room."

Overall, those respondents who reported this area as an important one viewed it as "how to organize instruction and management to maximize student task engagement and success."

Providing Emotional Support. Many (close to 40 percent) experienced support teachers wrote of the importance of their help in, as one of the respondent's phrased it, cultivating "a friendly relationship in the school setting and making myself readily available for advice or for listening should the need arise." Others noted the helpfulness of letting a novice teacher know that the experienced teacher understands how he/she feels, "the problems, the pressures that a teacher faces in the classroom."

Acknowledging some of the workplace deficits that may affect the morale of a beginner was noted as a form of assistance in this area. One support teacher reported that "T. began the year in 'Placed Program' which is not the place for a new, young, attractive, inexperienced teacher. After three weeks, she was assigned Pre-Algebra as a 'floating teacher.' All this affected her confidence and she needed a lot of reassurance to cope." Another support teacher in a situation where the novice also lost confidence, pointed out positive accomplishments that had been made.

In general, experienced support teachers view their assistance in providing emotional support as "listening to problems and frustrations, identifying with them, and specifying coping strategies that may have helped me."

Coaching Through Observation. Approximately one-third of the support teachers indicated that an important element of assistance was inviting novices to observe them in their classrooms and, in turn, to observe and critique their beginning teachers. Typically, one respondent writes, "The most important way in which I have helped my inductee this year is by letting him observe while I teach lessons. He has been able to identify all of the steps included in the lesson cycle."

In another case, a support teacher, to meet the need for coaching of a first-year bilingual teacher, arranged for her to observe and work with an experienced bilingual teacher in the building and with another less experienced bilingual teacher who had faced many of the same problems last year.

Those respondents who indicated that they observed and critiqued their assigned first-year teachers, in many cases, saw their observations as preparation for the novice's TTAS experiences. Wrote one, "The fear of assessments proved to be the biggest problem. We spent many hours after school discussing the materials and presentations until she felt comfortable."

Explaining School and District Policies, Procedures, and Expectations. Enabling first-year teachers to feel that they are a part of the culture of the district and the school requires that they understand the policies, procedures, and expectations (some of which may be unwritten) of the district and the school. Forty percent of the responding experienced support teachers saw this area as one of their major ways of assistance.

In their words, they help by "going over paperwork and what is expected to be documented;" "constantly giving assistance and guidance re the 'mountain' of forms to be filled out and the procedures to be followed for various administrative requirements;" "helping him to know the chain of command in the building;" "teaching him the system;" "directing her to proper channels to obtain certain information;" "giving her hints on how to deal with the rest of the faculty and staff;" "telling her about special education rules and guidelines, and also ARD forms;" and "giving advice on professional peer and administrative relationships."

Sharing, Procuring, Using Materials and Equipment. The area of assistance relating to first-year teachers' need to acquire and find those instructional materials and equipment necessary for their success in teaching was addressed by 28 percent of the experienced support teachers. Many wrote of sharing their own instructional materials; others helped their novice teachers to locate what was needed or to understand how to go about requesting such items.

Wrote one experienced support teacher, "I have provided her with most of the extra materials I have." Another, indicating the need of beginning teachers to learn how to use materials and equipment, as well as to obtain them, cited helping in the "use of AV equipment." More specifically, still another wrote, "I have given her materials with examples of items on the TEAMS test. Given her worksheets with pictures and prompts to help her students practice of the writing section of the test."

One respondent reported acting as an advocate for the new teacher by "reporting a shortage of textbooks to the principal, and supplying the teacher with material to substitute temporarily until the textbooks could be obtained."

Evaluating Students and Reporting to Parents. The confusion and hesitation which many first-year teachers experience in evaluating student achievement and behavior, and in reporting these evaluations, verbally and/or in writing, was apparent to 22 percent of the ESTs. Assistance in this area included "meeting her and her parents to help with fail-safe conferences;" giving "ideas and help regarding conferences with parents;" suggesting "ways to manage the grading of papers;" pointing out "what NOT to say regarding a child's behavior when needing to call on home disciplinary cases."

More technical advice on the evaluation process was reported by support teachers who helped first-year teachers to "set up the grade book, to count oral grades, and to fill out report cards properly."

Conclusion. Experienced support teachers indicated that they had assisted their first-year teachers most extensively in setting up and managing their classrooms, and in the planning and delivering instruction. They had given a great deal of needed emotional support, and had contributed to increasing the comfort level of the FYTs in relation to assessment. The experienced teachers shared their own materials and helped novices to obtain teaching supplies and gain access to equipment. Their knowledge of the culture of the district and school was felt by them to be a valuable contribution, as was their expertise in the process of evaluation of students and communication with parents.

In only one instance were the assistance efforts of an experienced support teacher reported to have been rejected by a first-year teacher.

Support Provided to First-Year Teachers By Experienced Support Teachers During Preceding Two Weeks

In the third approach to determining how experienced support teachers assisted first-year teachers, ESTs were asked to chart the ways they had worked with FYTs during the preceding two-week period. The areas of support reported, in order of number of incidents for each area, included: 1) helping to plan for and deliver instruction; 2) advising on classroom management and organization; 3) sharing materials, equipment and ideas; 4) preparing for assessment; 5) explaining policies, procedures and expectations of the district and the school; 6) assisting with student evaluation and reporting to parents; 7) working together in a general way such as attendance at meetings at which "many things were discussed.;" 8) observing the first-year teacher by the support teacher; 9) observing the EST by the first-year teacher; and 10) offering emotional support.

For each of these ten areas of support, Table 6 includes: percentage of support teachers reporting assistance in that area; greatest amount of time reported in that area; median time spent on incidents in that area; extent to which contacts were initiated by the experienced support teacher (EST), first-year teacher (FYT), mutually (BTH), or by another person (0TR); degree to which the problem was perceived to be important to the FYT (on a scale of 1 - 5 with 5 being "very important"); and the degree to which the contact was perceived to have been effective by the experienced support teacher (on a scale of 1 - 5 with 5 being "very effective").

Table 6: Support Provided First-Year Teachers
By Experienced Support Teachers

Area of Support	% of FYT Reprtng Area	Max Time (hrs)	Median Time (hrs)	% Initiated By				Importance of Problem		Effective of Cntact	
				ST	FYT	BTH	OTR	R=5	R=1	R=5	R=1
General Assistance	25	12.08	2.00	49	9	34	0	46	6	49	0
Classroom Management, Organization	48	18.03	.67	40	30	29	1	63	0	42	1
Planning, Delivering Instruction	48	5.08	.67	45	21	26	8	53	4	43	7
Emotional Support	11	16.08	.30	63	13	13	0	63	0	63	0
Observation of FYT by ST	16	2.17	.75	61	22	13	0	61	4	43	4
Observation of ST by FYT	15	12.50	.67	52	24	14	10	62	5	62	0
Policies, Procedures, Expectations	30	1.08	.50	44	28	23	2	53	2	53	0
Sharing Materials, etc.	36	8.08	.50	45	22	24	8	41	0	51	0
Preparation for Assessment	33	10.03	.67	43	38	15	4	72	0	60	0
Student Evaluation, Reporting to Parents	26	2.08	.50	50	25	14	11	67	0	56	6

*In some cases, this was not indicated.

The largest number of incidents of assistance reported by the experienced support teachers related to two areas: a) helping with instruction, and b) advising on classroom management. However, these concerns were not ranked as high in level of importance by the respondents as were the concerns in the area of "preparation for assessment," an area in which there were 15 percent fewer incidents of assistance than in the first two areas.

According to EST estimates, they initiated contacts more often than FYTs, initiating from 40 to 63 percent of the contacts with their FYTs. ESTs initiated the greatest proportion of contacts (63%) in the area of emotional support; 63 percent of ESTs rated this area to be of greatest importance and their assistance as very effective.

Ratings of importance of these problems ranged from a low of 41 percent who rated sharing materials as very important to a high of 72 percent who rated preparation for assessment as very important. First-year teachers tended to rate these areas of support as of greater importance than ESTs (from 62 to 89 percent of FYTs rated each area as very important).

When ESTs rated the effectiveness of their contacts in these areas, from 42 percent to 72 percent rated them as very effective. First-year teachers rated the effectiveness of ESTs higher than the ESTs, ranging from 62 to 89 percent of FYTs who rated the assistance very effective. Thus, for both the importance of problems and the effectiveness of intervention strategies, the ratings of beginning teachers were higher than those of experienced support teachers.

According to the data, of the total 407 incidents of assistance that were reported by the experienced support teachers, 46 percent were initiated by those ESTs, 24 percent were initiated by first-year teachers, and 22 percent were initiated mutually by both. Does this suggest that first-year teachers hesitate to ask for help? Or is it possible that they are less likely than the support teacher to recognize situations in which they need help? This question of initiation of assistance might be one for productive future study.

The median amount of time spent in assistance in eight of the ten areas was between 30 and 45 minutes for each support teacher reporting. Of the two areas that were exceptions, one was "General Assistance" for which the median time was two hours, a difference easily explained by the inclusion, in this area, of grade-level meetings, inservice programs, etc. The other was the area of "Emotional Support" for which the median time was 18 minutes.

In summary, the data drawn from the responses of experienced support teachers indicate a possible need for helping ESTs to increase their awareness of the value of their assistance to first-year teachers; for encouraging first-year teachers to initiate contacts with support teachers where assistance is needed; and for realistically providing adequate time for contacts between support teachers and first-year teachers. The data also affirms a working program including a preponderance of professional development support and a relatively small expressed need for emotional support.

Recommendations for More Effective Support To First-Year Teachers

The fourth question probed in the study was: **In what ways did ESTs perceive they could have been of greater assistance in the first two months of school?**

Experienced support teachers identified six areas in which their assistance could have been improved: characteristics of support teachers; organizational arrangements; emotional support; ideas and materials for instruction; observations, both ways; and information on policies and practices. These six categories varied greatly in the percentage of support teachers identifying them as areas in which more assistance could have been offered.

Characteristics of Support Teachers. A number of ESTs reported that they saw themselves as having "given as much assistance as possible" or of "doing an exceptional job." For those who felt they could have done more, mention was made of "becoming more active at an earlier date . . . I should have been more insistent about offering help earlier;" "asking her more often about ways I could help;" "structuring more time together;" and "not waiting for first-year teacher to ask for help."

One support teacher said she would have done more if she had been told "what a mentor is to do! I would be glad to do it to help but I have received very little if any information on being a mentor. Perhaps I should have asked for more information."

Organizational Arrangements. Half of the support teachers responding believed that they could have offered more help if the program had built into it, provisions for such elements as time to work together (by far the element most frequently mentioned), physical proximity of the pair, and matching grade levels and/or subject areas and even composition of students.

As part of the support program, formal consideration should be given to assigning fewer non-teaching responsibilities (such as extra-curricular sponsorships, committee work) to experienced support teachers and first-year teachers; such a policy would, many of these respondents say, enable them to be of more assistance to their first-year teachers.

In words of the support teachers: "I could have been of more assistance if we shared the same conference time or if I just had additional time to spend with him. If our room were closer."

"Our rooms are in different buildings. This causes some problems. I teach ESL and she teaches Bilingual. We could have been matched better."

"This is an ESL class and I don't have much expertise working with these children. If I were on her grade level, it would have been better (or she on mine)."

"My teaching is to the highest honors group while hers is for the lowest of levels. It is hard for her to model her teaching after mine."

"We both are very limited on time! I am because of serving on so many committees, etc., and she is because of family obligations."

"With all the inservices, setting up the room, getting books, and being grade level chairperson, it seems that I did not have enough time to offer beginning help until the students were there. It would be nice to have some more time in school without interruptions at the beginning."

"We both lack time to meet in order for us to exchange ideas, to consult with each other when in doubt. TIME has been the key of our anxieties."

One support teacher mentioned the great difficulty of helping a beginning teacher who had been assigned to a level for which she was not prepared. "She had no skills for teaching that grade level and would react negatively to suggestions. I wondered if she felt that I was suggesting too many things but she had no idea how to work with six-year olds!" This suggests an organization-imposed handicap to support when new teachers are assigned to subjects/levels for which they have not been prepared.

Emotional Support. Only four percent of experienced support teachers indicated that they could have given more emotional support to their FYTs. Wrote one, "I could have simply dropped in more to chat, not necessarily about school, but to further a trust in our friendship."

Perceived emotional resistance of the novice limited the amount of support given by the experienced support teacher who wrote, "I could have been of more assistance if the Alternative Certification Program intern was more open and free with me. . . . I had to feel my way and tell her what I thought she needed to know." In the same vein, another said, "I kept offering assistance and she was not forthcoming or did not utilize my offers."

One respondent recognized her beginning teacher's need for encouragement, but herself felt discouragement by "my first-year teacher's difficulty in processing directions and actively listening, especially to other teachers and administrators."

Giving emotional support would have been easier for one respondent if her assigned FYT had had a similar teaching philosophy; "I am more 'rigid' and strict; she is 'unstructured' so we have had several conflicts about teaching styles." This could also be considered an organizational restraint in that the program does not include matching pairs on the basis of teaching/learning styles.

Ideas and Materials for Instruction. Significantly, 98 percent of the respondents did not indicate that they could have given more assistance in the area of ideas and materials for instruction, and of the two percent who felt they should have done so, one percent indicated that time was the problem.

One experienced support teacher thought she could have done more in providing her FYT with ideas for "grouping methods," another wished they could have worked together "to make materials for specific lessons and activities to motivate learning in the classroom."

Observations (both ways). One-fourth of the experienced support teachers identified providing opportunities a) for first-year teachers to observe them, and b) for them to observe and critique first-year teachers as a major way they could have been of more assistance. A few respondents related this way of increasing assistance to, as one phrased it, "having 'quality time' to spend in preparation for assessments."

The lack of mutual observations was, in many instances, related to time constraints. An example of this relationship was cited by an EST: "Time is our greatest enemy. I just do not feel that I have been able to observe as much as I deem necessary," and "I wish I could give more time to peer coaching and observing, if I had another non-teaching period (release time during the regular school day)." Another felt she would have been more helpful "if Mrs. H. were to spend an entire day in my classroom observing. She has seen specific lesson but not an entire day to see how things flow and we move from one subject to the next."

While observing the experienced teacher was one way cited to be of more help, the need for reverse observations was also felt to be true: "I wish I could have observed her more often to offer her suggestions for TTAS."

Information on Policies and Practices. Only three percent of the experienced support teachers indicated that they could have been of more help to first-year teachers by giving them more information on policies and practices of the district and the school. A typical statement: "I could have made sure that she had all the necessary forms at the time she needed them." Another, however, pointed out that "HISD's report cards, grade books and lesson plan books were changed this year. I feel that I was not very much help in that area since I was learning about the new system myself."

Acquainting the first-year teacher with policies and practices relating to "referring students" would have been a way of helping, according to one respondent. Another wished he had helped his novice to "adjust to an unstable scheduling system."

Conclusion. While many support teachers did not see ways they might have been of more assistance to their first-year teachers, many others, in retrospect, wrote that they believed they could have done more. In some cases, they recognized their own personal limitations and the personal limitations of their novices as obstacles to be overcome. However, most of those wanting to have done more expressed the belief that district and, more especially, school organizational arrangements prevented them from assisting as much, or in as many ways, as they would like to have done. Chief among these limiting organizational arrangements was the lack of time in which the support efforts might be implemented successfully,

A major way of offering more support, as yet to be implemented fully, was seen to be providing more opportunities for observations by and of both the support teacher and the beginning teacher. This was related, in most instances, to the organizational constraint of time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

When the data drawn from experienced support teachers are synthesized, several conclusions can be drawn.

1. **The major single problem of first-year teachers, according to ESTs, is the amount of paperwork they are expected to master immediately. Other problems include classroom management and personal problems such as managing teacher time, lack of personal time, and personal financial problems.** Not considered important problems for FYTs were peer acceptance, relations with the school administrators, and lack of teaching freedom.

2. **Experienced Support Teachers provided greater assistance to FYTs in the tasks of teaching than in reacting to problems encountered in teaching.** Experienced support teachers provided greater assistance in categories of support identified as appropriate for beginning teachers (Odell,1989) than with problems. When similar areas were rated on both lists, those listed as assistance in solving problems were consistently rated lower than those identified as categories of support; for example, problems of managing the classroom had a mean rating of 3.33, while advice on student management had a mean of 3.81; problem of inadequate materials and equipment (M = 2.83), while mustering resources was M = 3.68.

3. In problem situations, ESTs provided the greatest support to FYTs in classroom management. Other problems with which they assisted included student motivation, managing teacher time, securing equipment and materials, and dealing with paperwork. They were not of assistance with FYTs' personal financial problems.

4. ESTs provided the greatest assistance to FYTs in four areas: providing information about the system in which they worked, providing emotional support, planning for and delivering instruction, and managing the classroom. Not only were these the most highly rated areas on objective items in the survey, each was discussed by at least 40 percent of ESTs in open-ended questions. ESTs were of least assistance in helping with the classroom environment and advice on working with parents. Coaching and observations were seldom provided by ESTs.

5. ESTs believe they are an important support for FYTs, particularly during the first days of school when everything is new.

6. When asked to recommend ways to improve the FYT support system, ESTs suggested ideas primarily for school and district administrators to implement. Only four percent believed they could have provided greater emotional support; only two percent believed they could have done more in sharing materials and ideas; only three percent believed they could have provided more information on policies and practices, and only one-fourth indicated that more observations would have provided greater support.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Experienced support teachers made a number of recommendations that are relevant to policy makers.

1. Provide times in the schedule when both ESTs and FYTs are free to work together (e.g., same planning period).

2. Require fewer non-instructional responsibilities of both ESTs and FYTs. First-year teachers, particularly, are pressured by the demands of a new teaching assignment; learning new procedures, policies, and routines; teaching a new curriculum (reading and interpreting new textbooks, teachers guides, and curriculum materials); settling into a new personal way of life, often after a move; and many other new and often stressful experiences. Structuring the demands of teaching to minimize first-year teachers' responsibilities would decrease the pressures on them. Likewise, decreasing the non-instructional responsibilities of ESTs, particularly during the first days of school, would provide greater time for them to assist first-year teachers.

3. Schedule periods during the year for FYTs to observe ESTs and for ESTs to observe FYTs, followed by time for feedback. Observations were seldom made because it was usually inconvenient to do so. Observations need not be scheduled as part of a regular daily routine, but if arrangements could be made so that several times each semester, ESTs could observe their FYTs and FYTs could observe their ESTs, more effective support could result.

Study 90-04

INTERVIEWS WITH FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHERS

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The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. The present study analyzes the perceptions of first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers after two months of school. The purpose of this study was to elicit information on their perception of their relationships and of the program.

Three professional educators, not connected with the school district, conducted interviews with first-year teachers and experienced support teachers in November 1989, synthesized the data, and wrote this report. Twelve (12) first-year teachers were interviewed, four from elementary schools, four from middle schools, and four from high schools. The twelve experienced support teachers to whom they had been assigned also were interviewed.

Confidentiality of the interview was stressed from the beginning to elicit candid responses from both the first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers. This report summarizes the results of these interviews.

First-Year Teachers

First-year teachers were found to have several common concerns at the beginning of their first school year. Concerns or problems facing FYTs were considered common when experienced by elementary, middle, and high schools alike. Of the numerous challenges facing the first-year teachers, the following were considered of major concern: discipline, inadequate instructional materials, ignorance of school and district policies and procedures, and student attendance and classroom enrollment. Some of the problems faced by first-year teachers (FYTs), such as student attendance and classroom enrollment, were not facilitated by the first-year teacher/experienced support teacher program. However, it was found that many problems common to most teachers during their first year of classroom instruction could be greatly lessened or avoided by interacting with an experienced support teacher (EST).

Most of the FYTs who were interviewed cited discipline and classroom management as major problems during their first several weeks of teaching. In many cases, ESTs were able to give FYTs suggestions and encouragement toward maintaining an atmosphere conducive to learning in their classrooms. Due to the inappropriateness of direct EST intervention, however, FYTs developed their own methods of classroom management. Unfortunately, many teachers still experience some degree of discipline problems within their classrooms.

Inadequacy of instructional materials was another major concern for FYTs. In several cases, teachers did not receive teacher's editions, answer keys, supplementary materials, or enough student texts until several weeks after school began. Many teachers also complained about the poor scholastic quality of their textbooks, and referred to other sources on a regular basis. The lack of adequate instructional materials was seen by some teachers as a contributing factor toward problems with discipline and efficient instructional preparation. Most FYTs borrowed materials and teacher's editions of the text from their ESTs. In addition to material aids, many ESTs offered assistance in lesson planning and ideas for presentation.

A third major problem faced by most FYTs was unfamiliarity with school procedures. Most teachers felt that the time required to process administrative paperwork significantly detracted them from the development of their pedagogic activities. Since they were already familiar with the procedures and paperwork within the school, ESTs were helpful to many teachers in this regard.

The help derived from ESTs by FYTs was given as an example of "best case" scenario for the FYT/EST program. Despite the theoretical advantages of assigning veterans to "help" beginning teachers, several limiting operational factors inhibit the effectiveness of the program. Foremost in this is the relationship that is or is not developed between the EST and FYT. Such a relationship is vital to their communication. If a congenial rapport is not developed between them, the chance of interaction is restricted. Several teachers indicated that they rarely communicated with or even saw their ESTs. Feelings between some FYTs and their ESTs ranged from sheer apathy to utter contempt. Obviously, without mutual respect between the FYT and the EST, the desire to accept or give ideas is severely limited. Respect and credibility between FYTs and ESTs was described as a balance between an acceptance of the senior-junior relationship and the recognition of peer status. Some teachers saw these personal factors as the inhibiting or limiting agent for a successful FYT/EST program.

Another operational factor that limits the effectiveness of the support program is the incompatibility of subject areas or disciplines between a FYT and the assigned EST. Some first-year teachers, to some extent, had problems with their curriculum. There were only few cases where the FYTs and ESTs were in the same subject area or discipline. Concerns were expressed by many first-year teachers that the ESTs, when accessible, were not adequately skilled in their field and therefore were unable to offer much assistance.

Some FYTs expressed concern with the physical arrangements between themselves and their ESTs. Because of their full or busy schedules, many had little time to meet with their ESTs. When FYTs were not in close proximity to their ESTs' classrooms, there was less chance for interaction. Many first-year teachers also felt that there was little incentive to "search" for an EST on another floor. Being assigned an EST who was in a convenient location was felt to help improve the chances for frequent and better interaction.

A congenial relationship is very important in promoting communication between the first-year teachers and their ESTs. Most teachers felt that some effort should be made to introduce the prospective FYT/EST teams before the actual selection was made. This was viewed as an opportunity for FYTs to meet their ESTs on an informal basis. It could also serve as a means by which incompatible teams could be recognized and avoided. Some FYTs went so far as to suggest that they would like the option of choosing their own ESTs. Also, by consensus, first-year teachers felt that assigning ESTs after school had already begun defeated the very purpose of the program. The practice of late assignment of ESTs was seen as a way to cultivate frustration and unreadiness by the FYT/EST team. This stresses the importance of the recommendation by first-year teachers that they need their experienced support teachers informally before team selection is made.

To encourage FYT/EST interaction, some first-year teachers thought there should be specific times during the week for scheduled meetings with their ESTs. Several also felt that, since ESTs were being paid for this extra assignment, ESTs should be more accountable for their position. Planned activities or checklists of potential problems were some of the ideas that first-year teachers felt their ESTs should address on a rather regular basis.

Experienced Support Teachers

Is HISD's Support Program a viable means toward improving the effectiveness of first-year teachers as well as their experienced support teachers? This is the question found at the heart of the survey and raised with ESTs during the interviews. More specific questions posed for ESTs were: What problems did the first-year teachers have at the start of the

70

school year? How did the ESTs help them? What contact did the ESTs have with the FYTs, and who initiated such contacts? What preparation for being ESTs would they suggest to HISD? Finally, how should the ESTs have helped the first-year teachers to be more effective?

The experienced support teachers were unanimous in their response to the question of preparation for being ESTs. They said that the training they had did help them a great deal, and that they benefited tremendously from the training they received. They added, however, that more training or workshops should be made available to ESTs either long before classes started, or toward the close of school; and definitely not after classes had already begun. They felt that the training should be carefully planned so as not to interfere with other district-wide training or workshops provided by HISD.

What are ESTs supposed to be? How should their relationship with FYTs be, and what could they do to improve themselves? ESTs would like to have a clear-cut definition of what they are, their functions and duties along with specific guidelines for being ESTs. They also would like to suggest that HISD be precise with its criteria for selecting ESTs. They would rather that the selection or recruitment of ESTs be done sooner than this year. One EST pointed out that in the recruitment process, first-year teachers should be made aware of such circumstances as payroll period, specific locations of the school to which they would be assigned, and components of the entire school population. This same EST asked why these things could not be made clearer to first-year teachers during the recruitment process. The EST believed that such information would help first-year teachers cope with the "realities" of the teaching profession.

Another area that the ESTs thought HISD should address as vigorously was the honorarium paid to ESTs. Considering that ESTs spend lunch hours, evenings, and even weekends in their effort to help first-year teachers, ESTs felt the stipend was inadequate. They all wanted it to be a little bit more attractive for all those extra duties they needed to do in school.

With regard to how ESTs could have helped first-year teachers become more effective, the consensus was that ESTs and the FYTs should have been matched up before classes started. They believed that if they could get together sooner, they could help prepare first-year teachers to face the classroom safe and secure. Many problems could be avoided if FYTs and ESTs were compatible right from the very start. Some ESTs cited attitude problems of FYTs, noting that not everybody could be teachers.

Some ESTs were readily available to assist FYTs. Most initiated openness during their initial meeting and conferences. They saw to it that beginning teachers got off the ground with trust and confidence. Some ESTs had offered classroom materials to first-year teachers, aside from showing them how to handle the classroom, and giving them techniques of teaching. The ESTs felt that their FYTs were secure in the knowledge that they had ESTs they could rely on when the "going gets tough." Mentors viewed their role as moral supporters to first-year teachers.

Although most FYTs sought ESTs for advice, there were mentors who initiated contact with their first-year teachers. Most ESTs felt that they could have interacted with the FYTs if they had time. They found it extremely difficult to juggle their own schedule to observe first-year teachers' classes without jeopardizing their own class schedules.

While ESTs believed that the concept of the support program is excellent, at the same time they felt that the current implementation leaves much to be desired. To them the same questions have been left unanswered. They wanted HISD to leave the door open for improvement of the program. They all could not deny the fact that the program could be far more effective if properly implemented. They all wanted the program to continue because of its impact on the community.

Conclusion

While there are disparities noted in the responses elicited from the interviewees, the survey shows a commonality of problems among first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers. The disparities are not so much that they are different as the degree of such differences. For example, first-year teachers said the help from their ESTs were minimal at best; whereas the ESTs claimed they extended help when sought for or when they deemed it necessary. While some ESTs said it should not matter whether their discipline was the same as their FYTs and that their experience would support this, most FYTs said it was important that their ESTs were in the same subject area. If the ESTs are given stipends, then they should be accountable and held responsible for carrying out their assignment, said most FYTs. ESTs contend the stipend is too little for what they do or are expected to do.

What is common to both beginning teachers and ESTs is the immediate necessity of proper training before the school year begins, not after classes have long started. Both need adequate time to meet and interact to help establish mutual respect and credibility.

The major problems encountered by first-year teachers were: classroom discipline and management; inadequate instructional materials; unfamiliarity not only with their respective school's policies and procedures but also those of the HISD administration; relationship with the ESTs (from sheer apathy to utter contempt); incompatibility of subject areas or disciplines; physical arrangements between them and their ESTs (class schedules and proximity) that inhibit communication.

Foremost among the ESTs' problems were: lack of training for both themselves and their FYTs; highly undefined role vis-a-vis expectations of them; criteria for selection and recruitment of ESTs (should be sooner not later); and amount of stipend expended, not commensurate to the time and effort expended.

The suggestions for solutions to the problems of first-year teachers and their ESTs are detailed in this report. The HISD should recognize first the existence of the problems before any solutions should be sought. The Support Program is viewed as a positive reinforcement by new teachers as well as a role-enhancer on the part of the ESTs. Proper implementation of the program should be a welcome activity by both first-year teachers and their experienced support teachers, for it improves the education of children and youth in the community, the ultimate beneficiary of the program's success.

Study 90-05

EFFECTS OF EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHER ASSISTANCE ON FIRST-YEAR TEACHER CONFIDENCE, SATISFACTION, AND PLANS TO CONTINUE TEACHING

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The current study examines further the data from the survey of first-year teachers conducted during November 1989. As the data for other studies were analyzed, further questions were raised that had implications for policy makers. These questions are listed below, and explored in this study.

The first four questions examine the potential effects of experienced support teachers (ESTs) on first year teachers' (FYTs') confidence as teachers, their satisfaction, and their plans to continue teaching. A total of 289 surveys were analyzed. Information on the induction program is included in Study 90-01, while demographic characteristics of this population are included in Study 90-002.

This study examines six research questions.

1. When FYTs and ESTs teach the same subjects and/or grade levels, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?

2. When FYT/EST classrooms are in closer proximity, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?

3. Are first-year teachers who rate more highly the assistance provided by their experienced support teachers more satisfied as teachers? (b) more confident as teachers? (c) more likely to continue teaching?

4. When school demographies and personal characteristics are considered, what factors, if any, are related to FYT confidence, satisfaction, and likelihood to continue teaching?

5. To what extent do experienced support teachers and first year teachers perceive the severity of FYT problems and the extensiveness of EST assistance as being the same?

6. Are there differences in FYT perceived problems attributable to ethnicity?

Instructional Assignments

The first research question explored the effects of ESTs being assigned from the same grade level or subject as FYTs. This has great implications for administrators who assign ESTs to FYTs. The research questions explored included: **When FYTs and ESTs teach the same subjects and/or grade levels, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?** These questions are explored in this section. Tables 1 and 2 include data on the effects of ESTs and FYTs teaching the same grade level or subject area.

Table 1: Effects of FYT/EST Teaching Same Grade or Subject on FYT Appraisal of EST Effectiveness as a Coach

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	1	11.41	11.41	6.53	.0111
Within Groups	288	502.92	1.75		
Total	289	514.33			

	EST/FYT Teach Same Grade or Subject?			
	Yes		No	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
EST Effectiveness as Coach	3.65	1.35	3.25	1.29

Table 2: Effects of FYT/EST Teaching Same Grade or Subject on FYT Appraisal of EST Assistance

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	1	11.10	11.10	8.28	.0043
Within Groups	287	384.54	1.34		
Total	288	395.64			

	EST/FYT Teach Same Grade or Subject?			
	Yes		No	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
EST Assistance	3.55	1.19	3.15	1.12

When data were analyzed using the ANOVA, no statistical differences were found between FYT/EST grade or subject assignment and FYT confidence or satisfaction. However, statistically significant differences were noted for FYTs' assessment of EST effectiveness as a coach and EST assistance. These data are included in Tables 1 and 2. It can be concluded that having FYT/EST teaching in the same grade level or subject makes a difference in their perception of the assistance provided by ESTs.

Classroom Proximity

In the second set of analyses, this study explored the research question: **When FYT/EST classrooms are in closer proximity, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?**

None of the ANOVAs were statistically significant, and therefore we concluded that proximity, at least for this group of teachers, did not effect their confidence, satisfaction, or rating of their EST coaching abilities or extensiveness of assistance.

Effects of EST Assistance

The third research question was: **Are first-year teachers who rate more highly the assistance provided by their experienced support teachers more confident as teachers? (b) more satisfied as teachers? (c) more likely to continue teaching?** Data related to this question are included in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

Table 3: EST Assistance and FYT Confidence as a Teacher

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	15.52	3.88	2.89	.0229
Within Groups	284	381.87	1.34		
Total	288	397.38			

	EST Assistance			
	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D.
Not at all confident as a teacher	2	1	5.00	.00
Some problems, but generally coping	71	25	3.18	1.16
As good as most first-year teachers	44	15	3.25	.99
Confident as a teacher	97	34	3.30	1.16
Very confident, am effective teacher	75	26	3.67	1.26
Total	289		3.37	1.17

Table 4: EST Assistance and FYT Satisfaction as a Teacher

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	34.05	8.51	6.63	.0001
Within Groups	283	363.19	1.28		
Total	287	397.25			

	EST Assistance			
	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D.
Not at all satisfied	5	2	2.60	1.14
Not satisfied	24	8	2.96	1.30
Neutral	57	20	3.26	1.23
Satisfied	144	50	3.25	1.13
Very Satisfied	58	20	4.02	.96
Total	288		3.37	1.18

Table 5: EST Assistance and FYT Plans for Teaching

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	13.17	3.29	2.46	.0460
Within Groups	283	379.28	1.34		
Total	287	392.44			

	EST Assistance			
	Frequency	Percent	Mean	S.D.
Probably my last year in HISD	12	4	2.58	1.31
Probably my last year to teach	5	2	2.60	1.34
Probably teach no more than 5 years	59	21	3.24	1.18
Probably stay in education throughout career	209	73	3.45	1.14

Data in Tables 3, 4, and 5 indicate that the extent of EST assistance makes a difference in FYT confidence, satisfaction, and tenure as a teacher. For all three ANOVAs, the results were significant and consistent: the greater the rating of EST assistance, the more likely the FYT is to be confident, satisfied, and to continue teaching.

School and Personal Factors

The fourth question in this study explored a wide range of factors to determine which, if any, were related to FYTs' satisfaction, confidence, and plans to continue teaching. The research question was: **When school demographies and personal characteristics are considered, what factors, if any, are related to FYT confidence, satisfaction, and likelihood to continue teaching?**

We hypothesized that 22 factors might be related to FYT satisfaction with teaching, confidence as teachers, and their plans to continue teaching. These factors included (a) for the school: ethnicity of students, proportion of students on free or reduced lunch program, student mobility, number of teachers in school, student achievement in mathematics and reading; (b) for the FYT's classroom: proportion of minorities in classroom, number of handicapped students; and (c) assessment by FYTs of their ESTs' coaching effectiveness and general assistance.

A summary of the results of a stepwise regression with confidence of first-year teachers as the dependent variable is found in Table 6.

Table 6: Stepwise Multiple regression with Confidence As A Teacher as the Dependent Variable

	Beta Weights			
Variable	Raw	SE	Standardized	t
Variables in Equation				
Satisfaction	.543238	.110013	.421287	4.938*
(Constant)	1.538914	.432576		
Variables not in Equation				
Gender	-.082912			-.972
Marital Status	-.011200			-.131
Ethnicity	-.140772			-1.650
Grade Taught	.093808			1.085
EST as a Coach	-.015209			-.172
EST Assistance	-.107702			-1.209
Tch Same Subj	.003601			.041
FYT Certification	-.069061			-.808
% Min Stds Rm	-.088816			-1.041
# Mainstmd Stds	.065303			.749
Plns to cont tchng	-.031628			-.360
Black Stds in Sch	-.063575			-.742
Hspanic Stds-Sch	-.015368			-.179
White Stds in Sch	-.015415			-.177

Variables not in Equation (Table 6, cont.)

Student Econ	-.096633			-1.109
No. Tchrs - Sch	.096983			1.133
Std Attendance	.010390			.121
Std Mobility	.036449			.429
Tea/ Std Ratio	-.055155			-.645
Read Achvmnt	.054052			.629
Math Achvmnt	.081469			.929

Correlation Coefficient

Multiple R	.42129
R Square	.17748
Adjusted R Square	.17020
Standard Error	1.06958

* *p*. < .05

Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS	F	*p*
Regression	1	27.89	27.89	24.38	.0000
Residual	113	129.27	1.14		

The only variable loading on teacher confidence was satisfaction. FYT who were more confident were also more satisfied. Table 7 includes the results of a stepwise multiple regression with satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Table 7: Stepwise Multiple regression with Satisfaction As A Teacher as the Dependent Variable

	Beta Weights			
Variable	Raw	SE	Standardized	t
Variables in Equation				
Confidence	.313788	.060341	.404621	5.200*
EST Assistance	.222630	.058975	.293485	3.775*
Student Econ	.007637	.002537	.235313	3.010*
White Students	.062141	.026780	.181758	2.320*
(Constant)	1.225835	.359949		

Variables not in Equation (Table 7, cont.)

Gender	-.023979	-.298
Marital Status	-.009443	-.120
Ethnicity	-.007580	-.094
Grade Taught	-.079611	-.940
EST as Coach	.120653	1.333
Same Subject	-.087171	-1.072
FYT Certification	.039037	.488
% Min Stds Rm	.002376	.028
# Mainstmd Stds	-.096157	-1.160
Plns to cont tchng	.146028	1.863
Black Stds in Sch	.099275	1.223
Hspanic Stds-Sch	.049124	.630
Std Attendance	.050178	.641
Std Mobility	-.032069	-.397
No. Tchers - Sch	-.045099	-.553
Tea/ Std Ratio	.025085	.319
Read Achvmnt	.051201	.629
Math Achvmnt	.017681	.219

Correlation Coefficient

Multiple R	.58019
R Square	.33662
Adjusted R Square	.31250
Standard Error	.75501

* p. < .05

Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Regression	4	31.82	7.95	13.95	.0000
Residual	110	62.70	.57		

Four of the 22 variables in the equation were significant. Contributing to first-year teacher satisfaction were first-year teacher confidence as a teacher, the assistance by their experienced support teacher, the proportion of students in the school on free and reduced lunch, and the proportion of white students in the school. FYTs were more satisfied when they were more confident, rated the assistance by their ESTs higher, taught in a school with a greater proportion of students on free and reduced lunch, and taught in a school with a greater proportion of white students.

Table 8 includes the results of a stepwise multiple regression with the plans of the first-year teacher for continuing to teach as the dependent variable. The same 22 variables were entered into the equation.

Table 8: Stepwise Multiple regression with Plans to Continue Teaching as the Dependent Variable

	Beta Weights			
Variable	Raw	SE	Standardized	t
Variables in Equation				
Satisfaction	.175685	.077086	.206999	2.279*
No. Teachers	-.008979	.004395	-.185544	-2.043*
(Constant)	3.356177	.369089		
Variables not in Equation				
Gender	-.035322			-.380
Marital Status	-.013340			-.146
Ethnicity	.027830			.303
Grade Taught	.136881			1.348
EST as Coach	.104770			1.107
EST Assistance	.124480			1.320
Same Subject	.036781			.390
FYT Certification	.134169			1.486
% Min Stds Rm	.018091			.199
# Mainstmd Stds	-.105948			-1.134
FYT Confidence	-.015004			-.149
Black Stds in Sch	.083565			.910
Hspanic Stds-Sch	-.065666			-.724
White Stds in Sch	.023400			.253
Economic (Lnch)	-.130834			-1.378
Std Attendance	.045180			.478
Std Mobility	-.007816			-.086
Tea/ Std Ratio	-.045919			-.505
Read Achvmnt	.021450			.226
Math Achvmnt	-.042799			-.447
Correlation Coefficient				
Multiple R	.29102			
R Square	.08469			
Adjusted R Square	.06835			
Standard Error	.74594			

* *p*. < .05

Analysis of Variance (Table 8, cont.)

	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Regression	2	5.77	2.88	5.18	.0070
Residual	112	62.32	.56		

Two variables were significantly related to first-year teachers' plans to continue teaching: their satisfaction as a teacher and the number of teachers in the school. They were more likely to continue teaching when they were more satisfied and when there were fewer teachers in their school.

Perception of FYTs by FYTs and ESTs

As data were being analyzed, we wondered to what extent ESTs and FYTs perceived FTY problems and the extent of EST assistance the same. Data on 174 pairs of ESTs and FYTs were analyzed to answer the question, **To what extent do experienced support teachers and first year teachers perceive the severity of FYT problems and the extensiveness of EST assistance as being the same?** Data in Tables 9 and 10 summarize the results of this analysis.

Table 9: Strength of FYT Problems as Perceived by FYTs and ESTs

	FYT Perceived Strength of FYT Problem Mean	EST Perceived Strength of FYT Problem Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	4.44	4.54		
Student Motivation	2.09	2.11		
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.68*	2.17	3.53	.001
Personal Financial Problems	2.28*	1.78	3.71	.0001
Managing Teacher Time	2.48	2.44		
Parent Co-operation	2.02	1.98		
Amount of Paperwork	3.35*	3.05	2.01	.046
School Administration	1.38	1.45		
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.40	1.48		
Lack of Personal Time	2.85*	2.26	4.22	.0001
Student Involvement	1.92	1.97		
Burn-Out	1.69	1.76		
Peer Acceptance	1.23	1.27		
Grading Students	1.79	1.90		

For 4 of 14 factors, first-year teachers perceived their problems to be greater than their experienced support teachers. These problem areas related to lack of materials and equipment, personal financial problems, amount of paperwork, and lack of personal time.

Table 10: Extent of EST Assistance as Perceived by FYTs and ESTs

	FYT Perceived Strength of FYT Problem Mean	EST Perceived Strength of FYT Problem Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	3.12	3.37		
Student Motivation	2.79	2.99		
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	3.19	2.97		
Personal Financial Problems	1.76*	1.29	2.69	.009
Managing Teacher Time	2.77	2.93		
Parent Cooperation	2.52	2.38		
Amount of Paperwork	2.53	2.94*	2.56	.012
School Administration	3.08	2.73		
Lack of Teaching Freedom	2.70	2.71		
Lack of Personal Time	2.46	2.44		
Student Involvement	2.52	2.87*	1.99	.049
Burn-Out	2.54	2.50		
Peer Acceptance	2.88*	2.15	3.05	.003
Grading Students	2.89	2.85		
Systems Information	3.64	4.18*	4.26	.0001
Mustering Resources	3.40	3.77*	2.57	.011
Instructional Information	3.58	4.05*	3.25	.001
Emotional Support	3.83	4.04		
Advice on Student Management	3.58	3.84		
Advice on Scheduling and Planning	3.30	3.54		
Help With the Classroom Environment	2.83	3.15*	2.15	.033
Demonstration Teaching	3.42	3.58		
Coaching	3.41	3.64		
Advice on Working with Parents	3.01	3.07		

In a second analysis, the ratings by first-year teachers were compared with those of their experienced support teachers in terms of the assistance provided by experienced support teachers. Statistically significant differences were recorded for 8 of the 24 factors. FYTs rated the assistance by their ESTs greater than did their ESTs in two areas: assistance with personal financial problems and assistance with peer acceptance. ESTs rated their assistance on 6 factors higher than FYTs rated them: assistance with paperwork, help in involving students in classroom activities, information about the school system, assistance in mustering resources, assistance with instruction and help with the classroom environment.

Ethnicity

One of the questions posed during the analysis was: **Are there differences in FYT perceived problems and EST assistance attributable to ethnicity?** Three ethnic groups were represented in a large enough sample to use in analyzing data related to this question: White, Black, and Hispanic. Twenty-eight one-way analyses of variance were computed, and when differences among the three groups was statistically significant, the Tukey-HSD procedure was completed.

None of the 14 ANOVAs were significant for EST assistance. There were no differences in FYTs perception of the assistance provided by EST attributable to ethnicity.

Four of the 14 analyses of FYT problems were significant. These four analyses are included in Tables 11-14.

Table 11: Perceived Problems of Managing Class by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	49.28	24.64	12.64	.0000
Within Groups	290	565.35	1.95		
Total	292	614.63			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Managing Class	2.89*	1.99	2.16

White FYTs state they have more problems managing the class than either Black FYTs or Hispanic FYTs.

Table 12: Perceived Problems of Student Motivation by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	17.31	8.65	6.03	.0027
Within Groups	290	416.16	1.44		
Total	292	433.47			

Table 12 Cont.

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Motivating Students	2.38*	1.86	1.93

White FYTs believe they have more problems motivating students than Black or Hispanic FYTs.

Table 13: Perceived Problems of Involving Students by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	17.65	8.82	5.33	.0054
Within Groups	290	480.58	1.66		
Total	292	498.23			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Involving Students	2.24*	1.93	1.61

White FYTs perceive they have more problems with involving students than Hispanics.

Table 14: Perceived Problems of Grading Students by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	13.44	6.72	5.00	.0074
Within Groups	290	389.98	1.34		
Total	292	403.41			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Grading Students	1.98*	1.46	1.76

White FYTs believe they have more problems grading students than Black FYTs.

Conclusions

Nine conclusions can be drawn from these findings. These have implications for policy makers concerned with factors that make a difference in how first-year teachers feel about their circumstances after two months of school.

1. When FYTs and ESTs teach in the same grade level or subject, FYTs rate more highly EST effectiveness as a coach and EST assistance.

2. FYT classroom proximity has no effect on their confidence, satisfaction, or rating of EST effectiveness as a coach or EST assistance.

3. FYTs who rate their ESTs as more effective are more confident, satisfied, and expect to have a longer tenure as a teacher.

4. FYTs are more confident when they are more satisfied; they are more satisfied as teachers when they are more confident, rate EST assistance more highly, teach in a school with a greater proportion of students on free and reduced lunch, and with a greater proportion of white students.

5. FYTs are more likely to continue teaching when they are more satisfied and when they are in a school with fewer teachers.

6. ESTs underestimated FYT problems in four areas: lack of materials and equipment, personal financial problems, amount of paperwork, and lack of personal time.

7. ESTs overestimated the extensiveness of their assistance in six areas: assistance with paperwork, help in involving students in classroom activities, information about the school system, assistance in mustering resources, assistance with instruction and help with the classroom environment.

8. No differences in FYT perception of EST assistance were attributable to FYT ethnicity.

9. White FYTs perceived greater problems managing their classes, motivating students, involving students, and grading students.

Study 90-06

PERCEPTIONS OF CERTIFIED ELEMENTARY TEACHERS AND ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS

W. Robert Houston
Faith Marshall
Teddy McDavid

The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. This is one of a number of studies of this program.

The present study analyzes the perceptions of first-year teachers who had completed a traditional teacher education program and those who were being prepared in an alternative certification program. The study sample was composed of 69 regularly certified elementary school teachers and 162 alternatively certified elementary school teachers. In November 1989, a survey was completed by the 231 teachers included in this study.

Six questions directed this study.

1. After two months of teaching, to what extent did certified elementary teachers (CETs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems?

2. After two months of teaching, to what extent did alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems?

3. Were there differences in the problems faced by certified elementary teachers (CETs) and alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) during the first two months of school?

4. After two months of teaching, were there differences between CETs and ACTs in assistance provided by experienced support teachers (ESTs)?

5. Were there differences between CETs and ACTs in their confidence, satisfaction, and plans to continue teaching?

6. Were there differences between CETs and ACTs in the extent of contact with professional development specialists?

Tables 1 and 2 provide information on the demographic variables of the certified elementary teachers and the alternatively certified elementary teachers, and information on their teaching assignments.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	Certified Elementary Teachers		Alternative Certified Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender				
Male	4	6	39	24
Female	64	94	123	76
Age				
21-25	38	59	25	16
26-30	12	18	38	23
31-35	7	11	38	23
36-40	2	3	30	19
41-45	4	6	15	9
46-50	1	2	5	3
51-55	1	2	3	2
56-60	0	0	0	0
Missing	0	0	8	5
Marital Status				
Single	42	61	55	34
Married	20	29	91	56
Divorced	7	10	16	10
Racial or Ethnic Identification				
Black, not of Hispanic origin	9	13	47	29
Hispanic	13	19	35	22
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	1	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0	1	1
White, not of Hispanic origin	46	67	77	48

When the demographic characteristics of certified elementary teachers (CETs) are compared with those of alternatively certified teachers (ACTs), CETs were more likely to be female, younger, single, and white.

More than three-fourths of all teachers were female; for ACTs this was 76 percent and for CETs, it was 94 percent. This difference between the two groups was statistically significant (chi sq = 21.39; *p*. = .0001). The mean age of CETs was 27.62 years and ACTs 32.38, a difference that was statistically significant (*t* = 4.08; *p*. = .0001). Sixty-one percent of CETs were single while 56 percent of ACTs were married; a greater proportion of ACTs than ECTs were black, while a greater proportion of ECTs were white. Table 2 provides information on their teaching assignments.

Table 2: Teaching Assignment

	Certified Elementary Teachers		Alternative Certified Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Level				
Preschool - Grade 3	44	64	117	72
Elementary Grades 4 - 6	25	36	45	28
Percentage of assignment in grades or subjects in area of certification				
None	0	0	13	8
25%	0	0	6	4
50%	0	0	3	2
75%	4	6	12	8
100%	64	94	123	78
Portion of students from minority groups				
Less than 10%	2	3	2	1
11-30%	4	6	1	1
31-70%	6	9	7	4
71-90%	15	22	16	10
More than 90%	42	61	136	84
Number of mainstreamed students				
None	33	48	87	54
One	10	15	25	16
Two or three	16	23	32	20
Four or five	6	9	12	8
More than five	4	6	4	3

About two-thirds of these teachers taught in pre-school through the third grade. Certified elementary teachers were more likely teaching in the area in which they were certified than alternatively certified teachers (*p*. = .001); and ALTs were more likely to be teaching students from minority groups (*p*. = .002). Assignments of both groups were in schools with predominantly minority students, however. Over 90 percent of both groups taught fewer than three mainstreamed students.

Extent of Problems and Assistance by Experienced Support Teachers

The first research question examined the importance of the problems of the 69 certified elementary teachers with the extensiveness of assistance by their experienced support teachers (ESTs). **After two months of teaching, to what extent did certified elementary teachers (CETs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems?** Table 3 includes the mean ratings of problems and EST assistance; *t* tests were computed to determine if these differences were statistically significant.

Table 3: Strength of CET Problems and Extent of EST Assistance, as Perceived by Certified Elementary Teachers

	Strength of CET Problem Mean	Extent of Perceived EST Assistance Mean
Student Motivation	1.71	2.83
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	2.59	3.43
Personal Financial Problems	2.23	1.84
Managing Teacher Time	2.28	3.00
Parent Cooperation	1.82	2.82
Amount of Paperwork	3.09	2.69
School Administration	1.29	3.13
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.38	2.95
Lack of Personal Time	2.68	2.44
Student Involvement	1.83	3.00
Burn-out	1.71	2.78
Peer Acceptance	1.23	3.20
Grading Students	1.61	3.16

In only one area did certified elementary teachers perceive that EST assistance was not so great as their problem: personal financial problems. In all other areas, the assistance was more than adequate, and in this one, the help provided by ESTs is probable.

The second research question compared problems with EST assistance for alternatively certified teachers: **After two months of teaching, to what extent did alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) perceive**

their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems? Data related to this question are included in Table 4.

Table 4: Strength of Alternatively Certified Teacher Problems and Extent of EST Assistance, as Perceived by ACTs

	Strength of ACT Problem Mean	Extent of Perceived EST Assistance Mean
Managing the Classroom	2.61	2.92
Student Motivation	2.31	2.68
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	2.73	2.84
Personal Financial Problems	2.42	1.58
Managing Teacher Time	2.78	2.60
Parent Cooperation	2.08	2.32
Amount of Paperwork	3.55	2.34
School Administration	1.63	2.61
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.56	2.24
Lack of Personal Time	3.27	2.16
Student Involvement	1.91	2.22
Burn-out	1.74	2.24
Peer Acceptance	1.43	2.50
Grading Students	2.00	2.75

Alternatively certified teachers rated the assistance of their ESTs lower than the strength of their problems in three areas: personal financial problems, amount of paperwork, and lack of personal time. While the lack of personal time was not directly tied to the amount of paperwork, written comments of first-year teachers indicated that paperwork caused them inordinate time. ESTs typically viewed all three of these areas as not being of central concern to them in their role, and dealing with personal financial problems as not appropriate at all.

Perceived Problems of CETs and ACTs

The third research question was concerned with the importance of the problems of CETs and ACTs: **Were there differences in the problems faced by certified elementary teachers (CETs) and alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) during the first two months of school?** Table 5 includes data on this question.

The mean ratings of problems by alternatively certified elementary teachers was greater in all 14 areas than those of certified elementary teachers; however, six areas were significantly higher. ACTs perceived greater problems than CETs in student motivation, managing teacher time, the amount of paperwork, school administration, lack of personal time, and grading students.

Table 5: Strength of Problems of Certified Elementary Teachers Compared with Those of Alternatively Certified Teachers

	Strength of CET Problem Mean	Strength of ACT Problem Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.29	2.61		
Student Motivation	1.71	2.31	3.84	.0001
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	2.59	2.73		
Personal Financial Problems	2.23	2.42		
Managing Teacher Time	2.28	2.78	2.77	.0006
Parent Cooperation	1.82	2.08		
Amount of Paperwork	3.09	3.55	2.05	.043
School Administration	1.29	1.63	2.35	.020
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.38	1.56		
Lack of Personal Time	2.68	3.27	2.67	.009
Student Involvement	1.83	1.91		
Burn-out	1.71	1.74		
Peer Acceptance	1.23	1.43		
Grading Students	1.61	2.00	2.43	.016

Assistance by ESTs to CETs and ACTs

Experienced support teachers worked with first-year teachers on problem situations and in general areas. The fourth research question considered the extensiveness of assistance provided by experienced support teachers to CETs and ACTs: **After two months of teaching, were there differences between CETs and ACTs in assistance provided by experienced support teachers (ESTs)?** Table 6 includes data related to assistance by experienced support teachers on problems, while Table 7 compares the ratings of assistance in general areas.

Certified elementary teachers rated the extensiveness of the assistance they received from their ESTs higher on all 14 problem areas than alternatively certified teachers. For five of the 14 areas, the difference was statistically significant. These areas were securing materials and equipment, parent cooperation, lack of teaching freedom, student involvement. and peer acceptance.

Table 6: Extent of EST Assistance With Problems as Perceived by Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternative Certified Teachers

	Extent of CET Assist Mean	Extent of ACT Assist Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	3.13	2.92		
Student Motivation	2.83	2.68		
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	3.43	2.84	2.41	.018
Personal Financial Problems	1.84	1.58		
Managing Teacher Time	3.00	2.60		
Parent Cooperation	2.82	2.32	2.01	.047
Amount of Paperwork	2.69	2.34		
School Administration	3.13	2.61		
Lack of Teaching Freedom	2.95	2.24	2.64	.010
Lack of Personal Time	2.44	2.16		
Student Involvement	3.00	2.22	3.18	.002
Burn-out	2.78	2.24		
Peer Acceptance	3.20	2.50	2.32	.024
Grading Students	3.16	2.75		

ESTs assisted these first-year teachers in a number of ways other than with problems. Odell (1989) had identified the substance of EST assistance to beginning teachers, and her categories were used as the basis for a series of ten rating scales. Means for CETs and ACTs on these scales are included in Table 7.

Table 7: Assistance by Experienced-Support Teachers of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternative Certified Teachers

	Extent of CET Assist Mean	Extent of ACT Assist Mean	t	p
Systems Information	3.93	3.41	2.78	.006
Mustering Resources	3.66	3.14	2.20	.030
Instructional Information	3.67	3.52		
Emotional Support	4.04	3.53	2.45	.016
Advice on Student Management	3.84	3.28	2.61	.010
Advice on Scheduling & Planning	3.48	3.28		
Help with the Classroom Environment	2.82	2.70		
Demonstration Teaching	2.42	3.84	6.09	.0001
Coaching	2.66	3.71	4.57	.0001
Advice on Working with Parents	3.24	2.86		

From Odell, S. J. Developing support programs for beginning teachers. In L. Huling-Austin et al. Assisting the Beginning Teacher (p. 31). Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Certified elementary teachers rated their assistance in eight of ten areas higher than alternatively certified teachers, and four of these differences were statistically significant. Certified teachers received more assistance in information about the system, mustering resources, emotional support, and advice on scheduling and planning. Alternatively certified teachers, however, received significantly greater assistance in demonstration teaching and coaching.

Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans to Continue Teaching

The fifth research question was: **Were there differences between CETs and ACTs in their confidence, satisfaction, and plans to continue teaching?** Data related to this question are included in Table 8.

Table 8: Confidence, Satisfaction, and Future Plans of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternative Certified Teachers

	Mean	Mean	t	p
Confidence as a Teacher	3.75	3.80		
Satisfaction as Teacher	4.06	3.73	2.69	.008
Continue Teaching?	3.67	3.67		
Teaching Plans in Five Years	1.41	1.86	3.39	.001

Certified elementary teachers were more satisfied as teachers than alternatively certified teachers, a difference statistically significant. They also were more likely to be employed outside the field of education.

Professional Development Specialists

The sixth research question was: **Were there differences between CETs and ACTs in the extent of contact with professional development specialists?** Table 9 includes information related to the individual contacts of ESTs and ACTs and their contacts in group settings with professional development specialists.

Professional development specialists spent more time with alternatively certified elementary teachers than with regularly certified teachers, both individually and in groups. These differences were statistically significant.

Table 9: Extent of Contact by Professional Development Specialists With Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternative Certified Teachers

	Certified Elementary Mean	Alternative Certified Mean	t	p
Individual Contact	2.32	2.65	2.48	.014
Contact in Group Settings	1.87	2.53	4.45	.0001

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions can be drawn from these findings.

1. When the demographic characteristics of certified elementary teachers (CETs) are compared with those of alternatively certified teachers (ACTs), **CETs were more likely to be female, younger, single, and white.**

2. **Problems of alternatively certified teachers were greater than those of regularly certified teachers** in six areas: student motivation, managing teacher time, the amount of paperwork, school administration, lack of personal time, and grading students.

3. **Regularly certified teachers received greater assistance from their experienced support teachers** than alternatively certified teachers in five areas: securing materials and equipment, parent cooperation, lack of teaching freedom, student involvement, and peer acceptance.

4. **Alternatively certified teachers rated higher than regularly certified teachers the extent of demonstration teaching and coaching assistance they received.**

5. **Professional development specialists worked more time with alternatively certified teachers** than certified elementary teachers, both individually and in group settings.

Study Report 90-08

Designing Effective Induction Programs

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The Problem of Continuous Preparation

Recognition of the unmet needs of beginning teachers has appeared in the professional literature for decades (Brooks, 1987; Ingebritson, 1950; Jersild, 1966; Ligania, 1970; Lortie, 1975; Ryan et al., 1980, to cite just a few). Prior to 1980, comprehensive programs to meet these needs were located primarily in other countries such as Great Britain and Australia (Fisher et al, 1978; Julius, 1960).

Accounts of isolated efforts to assist novice teachers during the past 50 years were surveyed by Johnston (1981) who found only a few that were evaluated. A 1982 survey (Marshall) of induction support offered by 72 districts across the United States indicated informal practices rather than systematic programs based on identified needs. In 1981 Florida was the sole state with a mandated induction program; by 1989, at least 31 states had either implemented or were piloting or planning some type of comprehensive support system for first-year teachers (Huling-Austin et al., 1989).

More recently the issue of separating assistance from assessment has been acknowledged in the literature. Huling-Austin et al. (1989) identifies the difficulty first-year teachers experience in sharing problems with, and seeking help from, those who will also determine whether or not that teacher will be retained. Schlechty and Vance (1983) conclude that the dropout rate of new teachers during the first two years has reached a high of 30 percent.

Organization of the Program

The Houston Independent School District instituted a support program for the 1989-1990 school year to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Houston I.S.D. program focuses on assistance for novice teachers; those in support positions do not have an evaluative function.

Each first-year teacher was paired with a mentor who usually taught the same subject or grade level and was assigned to the same school, was an experienced teacher, agreed to work with a beginning teacher, and was paid a modest stipend. The mentor was expected to visit the first-year teacher's classroom, assist in locating resources, provide emotional support, and help plan for instruction and classroom management. First-year teachers and mentors reported to the principal who continued to be responsible for the school and its personnel.

A professional development specialist was assigned to coordinate the programs of first-year teachers in each of the 14 districts in HISD. The professional development specialists provide support by making materials available directly to first-year teachers; assisting and counseling mentors and first-year teachers; demonstrating classroom lessons; and organizing, presenting, and facilitating staff development for mentors and first-year teachers.

First-year teachers met about twice monthly in job-alike informal sessions with a mentor or professional development specialist. They also participated in a preschool workshop and formal training sessions during the year.

The training program for first-year teachers was designed to meet specific needs as identified by TTAS appraisals, mentor observations, and preservice records. Topics included district and building policies, practices, and regulations; unique characteristics and needs of the school and community; activities related to the opening and closing of school; policies and practices related to student assessment and reporting; general instructional strategies; content knowledge and curriculum assistance; classroom management and organization; communication and conferencing skills; self-evaluation techniques; and use of instructional media.

Mentors completed a training program prior to being assigned a first-year teacher. Topics in the program included: communication and conferencing skills, observation techniques, models of instruction, effective school correlates, and specialized training in the Texas Teacher Appraisal System. A workshop in November for mentors focused on the correlates of effective schools: instructional leadership, instructional focus, teacher behavior/ high expectations, school climate, and measurement.

First-year Teachers

Of the 309 first-year teachers who completed the study instrument and are included in this study, over three-fourths were female and nearly half single. The median age of first-year teachers was 30, with 30 percent younger than 25 and 27 percent over 35. Fifty-seven percent were White, 23 percent Black, and 18 percent Hispanic. Thirty-six percent were certified in the field in which they were teaching and 58 percent were in an alternative certification program.

Eighty-three percent of the first-year teachers taught in elementary schools, with 58 percent teaching in the primary grades (preschool - grade 3). Eighteen percent taught in secondary schools. Most of the secondary teachers taught academic subjects. One-fourth (24%) were bilingual teachers, 10 percent English as a second language teachers, and only 3 percent special education teachers. Eighty-one percent were teaching in their area of certification.

The teaching assignments of first-year teachers were primarily in minority schools. Seventy-three percent taught classes with over 90 percent minority students, 15 percent taught classes with 71 - 90 percent minority students, and only 3 percent were assigned to classes with less than 30 percent minority pupils. Eleven percent had more than 5 mainstreamed students and another 31 percent from two to five mainstreamed students; however, 45 percent had none in their classes.

Mentor Teachers

The 230 mentors who completed the study instrument were primarily women (88%), and their mean age was 41.46. Sixty-three percent of the mentor teachers were married, the remainder either single or divorced. Forty-three percent were White, 37 percent Black, and 19 percent Hispanic.

About three-fourths of mentor teachers (74%) taught in elementary schools, with 52 percent teaching in the primary grades. Almost all of the secondary teachers were teaching academic subjects. Seventeen percent taught bilingual education and 10 percent English as a second language classes.

The results reported herein were derived from an instrument completed by mentors and first-year teachers in October 1989 after the first-year teachers had taught for two months. Objective questions were supplemented by open-ended questions to elicit qualitative information. The results summarized here are reported in greater detail in seven technical reports.

Perceptions and Recommendations of First-year teachers

When first-year teacher perceptions are synthesized, several conclusions can be drawn.

1. First-year teachers are generally confident, satisfied, and plan to remain in teaching. Three-fourths of first-year teachers are as confident as most first-year teachers, and 60 percent are quite confident. One-fourth are having problems but generally coping as a teacher. More than two-thirds are satisfied or very satisfied as teachers, and 11 percent are dissatisfied.

Three-fourths plan to remain in education throughout their career, and another 20 percent plan to teach for less than five years. Only 4 percent indicated they probably would not teach next year in HISD, and another 2 percent not teach anywhere. Eight percent do not plan to be teaching in five years.

2. Mentor teachers are generally effective in assisting first-year teachers. Over three-fourths (77%) of mentor teachers were rated as supportive to outstanding by their first-year teachers, and another 18 percent a lukewarm "somewhat helpful;" 6 percent of mentor teachers, however, did not assist first-year teachers at all. One-fourth of mentor teachers (24%) were judged ineffective as coaches, with one-fourth (23%) rated adequate coaches and half (53%) effective or very effective.

3. Professional Development specialists spend considerable time individually and in groups with first-year teachers (about 4 hours in individual contact and 5 hours in group settings with each first-year teacher). However, 15 percent of first-year teachers had no individual contact with professional development specialists and 28 percent had none in group settings.

4. Mentor teacher and first-year teacher assignment to the same grade level or subject areas facilitated assistance.

5. Mentor teachers provided the greatest support in the following areas: sharing materials; planning and delivering instruction; organizing and managing the classroom; preparing for student and teacher assessment; providing emotional support; providing information on school policies and expectations; and evaluating students and reporting to parents.

6. Emotional support of mentor teachers was vital to first-year teachers.

7. Persons other than mentor teachers assisted first-year teachers, and first-year teachers need, value, and use their support. The school principal was particularly key to this.

8. Teaching assignment was not a factor in the severity of problems, extensiveness of assistance, or feelings of satisfaction or confidence among first-year teachers.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Several recommendations from first-year teachers are relevant to policy makers implementing the support program.

1. Carefully screen mentor teachers before assigning to first-year teachers.

2. Develop ways to decrease paperwork which first-year teachers are expected to complete, reexamine the distribution of materials and equipment, and provide opportunities for first-year teachers to receive counseling on personal finances. First-year teachers experienced three major problems during the first two months of school: (a) the overwhelming amount of paperwork, for which they were not prepared; (b) lack of personal time; and (c) lack of adequate materials and equipment. Mentor teacher assistance with the first two problems was less extensive than first-year teachers needed, probably because the solutions to problems were not in their domain. Mentor teachers also were not able, nor were they typically called upon to provide, counseling with personal financial problems.

3. Provide adequate supplies, materials, and equipment to teachers, particularly first-year teachers. Establish a process in each school so teachers can learn how to secure needed resources. Provide teachers' editions of textbooks and curriculum guides before school begins. A significant number of first-year teachers complained about the expense of purchasing supplies from their own pockets.

4. Assign mentor teachers who teach in the same grade level, subject, or special assignment as the first-year teachers. Schedule conference periods, lunch periods, etc. so as to provide more time for mentors and first-year teachers to work together and to observe each other teach.

5. Provide training for mentor teachers prior to their assignment.

Recommendations for Mentors

First-year teachers made a number of recommendations that would improve the support services of mentors.

Mentor teachers should:

1. Have regular scheduled meetings at least weekly with their first-year teachers.

2. Be proactive in the relationship, offering assistance rather than waiting to be asked.

3. Listen and be supportive.

4. Share specific ideas and instructional materials with first-year teachers.

5. Assist first-year teachers in writing lesson plans, particularly long-range plans.

6. Observe first-year teachers often and regularly, and provide constructive feedback.

7. Assist first-year teachers in designing and implementing good classroom management processes and effective discipline.

8. Help first-year teachers to become familiar with school rules, policies, and procedures. First-year teachers are particularly sensitive to the expectations of administrators, and need greater details relative to expectations.

Conclusions of Mentors

When the data drawn from the perceptions of mentors are synthesized, several conclusions can be drawn.

1. The major single problem of first-year teachers, according to mentors, is the amount of paperwork they are expected to master immediately. Other problems include classroom management and personal problems such as managing teacher time, lack of personal time, and personal financial problems. Not considered important problems for first-year teachers were peer acceptance, relations with school administrators, and lack of teaching freedom.

2. Mentors provided greater assistance to first-year teachers in the tasks of teaching than in reacting to problems encountered in teaching. Mentors provided greater assistance in categories of support identified as appropriate for beginning teachers (Odell,1989, p. 31) than with problems. When similar areas were rated on both lists, those listed as assistance in solving problems were consistently rated lower than those identified as categories of support; for example, problems of managing the classroom had a mean rating of 3.33, while advice on student management had a mean of 3.81; problem of inadequate materials and equipment (M = 2.83), while mustering resources was M = 3.68.

3. In problem situations, mentors provided the greatest support to first-year teachers in classroom management. Other problems with which they assisted included student motivation, managing teacher time, securing equipment and materials, and dealing with paperwork. They were not of assistance with first-year teachers' personal financial problems.

4. Mentors provided the greatest assistance to first-year teachers in four areas: providing information about the system in which they worked, providing emotional support, planning for and delivering instruction, and managing the classroom. Not only were these the most highly rated areas on objective items in the instrument, each was discussed by at least 40 percent of mentors in open-ended questions. Mentors were of least assistance in helping with the classroom environment and advice on working with parents. Coaching and observations were seldom provided by mentors.

5. Mentors believe they are an important support for first-year teachers, particularly during the first days of school when everything is new.

6. When asked to recommend ways to improve the first-year teacher support system, mentors suggested ideas primarily for school and district administrators to implement. Only four percent believed they could have provided greater emotional support; only two percent believed they could have done more in sharing materials and ideas; only three percent believed they could have provided more information on policies and practices, and only one-fourth indicated that more observations would have provided greater support.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Mentors made a number of recommendations that are relevant to policy makers.

1. Provide times in the schedule when both mentors and first-year teachers are free to work together (e.g., same planning period).

2. Require fewer non-instructional responsibilities of both mentors and first-year teachers. First-year teachers are pressured by the demands of a new teaching assignment; learning new procedures, policies, and routines; teaching a new curriculum (reading and interpreting new textbooks, teachers guides, and curriculum materials); settling into a new personal way of life, often after a move; and many other new and often stressful experiences. Structuring the demands of teaching to minimize first-year teachers' responsibilities would decrease the pressures on them. Likewise, decreasing the non-instructional responsibilities of mentors, particularly during the first days of school, would provide greater time for them to assist first-year teachers.

3. Schedule periods during the year for first-year teachers to observe mentors and for mentors to observe first-year teachers, followed by time for feedback. Observations were seldom made because it was usually inconvenient to do so. Observations need not be scheduled as part of a regular daily routine, but if arrangements could be made so that several times each semester, mentors could observe their first-year teachers and first-year teachers could observe their mentors, more effective support could result.

Confidence, Satisfaction, and Future Plans of First-year Teachers

Data were analyzed to elicit answers to questions posed by policy makers charged with organizing and implementing support systems for first-year teachers. They are concerned with factors that make a difference in the confidence, satisfaction, and future plans of first-year teachers.

1. When first-year teachers and mentors teach in the same grade level or subject, first-year teachers rate more highly mentor assistance and effectiveness as a coach.

2. The classroom proximity of first-year teachers and their mentors has no effect on their confidence, satisfaction, or rating of mentor assistance or effectiveness as a coach.

3. First-year teachers who rate their mentors as more effective are more confident, satisfied, and expect to teach longer.

4. First-year teachers are more confident when they are more satisfied; they are more satisfied as teachers when they rate their mentors' assistance more highly, and teach in a school with a smaller proportion of students on free and reduced lunch and with a greater proportion of white students.

5. First-year teachers are more likely to continue teaching when they are more satisfied and when they are in a school with fewer teachers.

6. Mentors underestimated first-year teacher problems in four areas: lack of materials and equipment, personal financial problems, amount of paperwork, and lack of personal time.

7. Mentors overestimated the extensiveness of their assistance in six areas: assistance with paperwork, help in involving students in classroom activities, information about the school system, assistance in mustering resources, assistance with instruction and help with the classroom environment.

8. No differences in first-year teacher perception of mentor assistance were attributable to first-year teacher ethnicity.

9. White first-year teachers perceived greater problems managing their classes, motivating students, involving students, and grading students than minority first-year teachers.

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Study 90-09

PERCEPTIONS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS OF THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHERS AFTER 8 MONTHS OF SCHOOL

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The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. The present study analyzes the perceptions of first-year teachers at the end of the first year. The specific questions that directed this study include:

1. What were the major problems as perceived by first-year teachers (FYTs) during their first year of teaching?
2. To what extent did FYT perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to be helpful in solving these problems?
3. To what extent and in what areas did FYTs perceive their ESTs to have assisted them?
4. In what ways did FYTs suggest that ESTs could have been of more assistance?
5. In what ways did FYTs suggest the support system could be improved?
6. To what extent did FYTs feel confident and satisfied at the end of their first year of school?
7. What vocational plans did FYTs have at the end of their first year of schooling?
8. What differences, if any, are there in perceived problems and assistance of teachers who plan to continue teaching and those who would enter another career?

Characteristics and Teaching Assignments of First-Year Teachers

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the demographic characteristics of first-year teachers. Their gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, parents' education, and certification status are included in the first table while the nature of their teaching assignment is included in Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	42	18
Female	197	82
Age		
21-25	84	35
26-30	51	21
31-35	35	15
36-40	27	11
41-45	23	10
46-50	6	2
51-55	6	2
Not indicated	9	4
Marital Status		
Single	120	50
Married	100	41
Divorced	22	9
Racial or Ethnic Identification		
Black, not of Hispanic origin	47	20
Hispanic	37	15
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0
White, not of Hispanic origin	153	64
Father's Education		
Did not finish high school	38	16
Graduated from high school	61	26
Attended college but did not graduate	48	20
Graduated from college	54	23
Attained a degree beyond the bachelors	36	15
Mother's Education		
Did not finish high school	38	16
Graduated from high school	70	30
Attended college but did not graduate	47	20
Graduated from college	52	22
Attained a degree beyond the bachelors	28	12

Over 80 percent of FYTs were female, and half were single. The median age of first-year teachers was 30, with 35 percent younger than 25 years, 36 percent between 25-35, and 25 percent over 35. Sixty-four percent (64%) were White, 20 percent Black, and 15 percent Hispanic. Over one-third (38%) of their fathers and 34 percent of the mothers had at least a college degree. On the other hand, 16 percent of their parents had not finished high school.

Table 2: Teaching Assignment

	Frequency	Percent
Certification Status		
Certified in field in which teaching	129	54
In alternative certification program	91	38
Certified but teaching in different field	6	3
Not certified	12	5
Level		
Preschool-Grade 3	130	56
Elementary Grades 4-6	49	21
Middle School/Jr. High	25	11
Senior High School	29	12

Over half (54%) were certified in the field in which they were teaching and 38 percent were in an alternative certification program. While this study analyzes all FYTs, alternative certification program teachers who had little professional education training are compared with FYTs who were fully certified in Studies 90-05 and 90-12.

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of FYTs taught in elementary schools, with 56 percent teaching in the primary grades (preschool - grade 3). Twenty-three percent (23%) taught in secondary schools.

Problems of First-year Teachers

The first question explored in this study was: **What were the major problems as perceived by first-year teachers during their first year of school?** A series of problems were included in the survey and first-year teachers asked to rate them as a major problem (5), a problem (3), or not a problem (1). The mean ratings, standard deviations, and ranks of each of the identified problems are included in Table 3.

Table 3: Problems of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	2.53	1.46	4
Student Motivation	2.08	1.29	9
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.76	1.52	3
Personal Financial Problems	2.21	1.41	7
Managing Teacher Time	2.25	1.25	6
Parent Cooperation	2.42	1.41	5
Amount of Paperwork	2.97	1.46	1
School Administration	1.46	1.02	13
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.54	1.12	12
Lack of Personal Time	2.82	1.50	2
Student Involvement	2.09	1.36	8
Burn-out	1.85	1.27	10
Peer Acceptance	1.28	.89	14
Grading Students	1.65	1.06	11

The major problem identified by FYTs was the *amount of paperwork* they were expected to complete (M = 2.97). *Lack of personal time* was ranked second (M = 2.82) and *lack of adequate materials and equipment* third (M = 2.76). *Managing the classroom* was fourth (M = 2.53) and *parent cooperation* fifth (M = 2.42). When these are considered as a whole, they reflect the FYTs' need to organize and manage time, resources, self, and students. Peer acceptance (M = .89), school administration (M = 1.46), and lack of teaching freedom (M = 1.54) were not considered problems by FYTs.

While the order of problems changed very little between October and April, FYTs rated problems as less severe in April.

Experienced Support Teacher Assistance In Solving Problems

The second research question in the study was: **To what extent did first-year teachers perceive their experienced support teachers to be helpful in solving these problems?** They were asked to respond using the scale, greatly assisted me (5); some assistance (3); or no assistance (1). Table 4 includes mean ratings for first-year teachers.

Assistance by ESTs in solving problems was not highly rated by FYTs; the mean ratings for only one of these problem areas (classroom management -- M = 3.09) was above 3.00, the rating for "Of Some Assistance."

While ESTs provided the greatest support in *classroom management* (M = 3.09), this was closely followed by *materials and equipment* (M = 2.93),

Table 4: Support by EST in Solving Problems
Of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	3.09	1.49	1
Student Motivation	2.75	1.38	5
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.98	1.52	2
Personal Financial Problems	1.48	1.16	14
Managing Teacher Time	2.67	1.47	8
Parent Cooperation	2.46	1.42	12
Amount of Paperwork	2.53	1.46	9
School Administration	2.96	1.61	3
Lack of Teaching Freedom	2.68	1.54	6.5
Lack of Personal Time	2.13	1.47	13
Student Involvement	2.52	1.41	10
Burn-out	2.47	1.58	11
Peer Acceptance	2.68	1.62	6.5
Grading Students	2.78	1.50	4

grading students (M = 2.98), and *working with school administration* (M = 2.96). As one would expect, the least assistance provided FYTs was related to their *personal financial problems* (M = 1.48). Means for EST assistance were higher at the end of the year than after two months of school except for assistance with *personal financial problems*. The rank order among items, however, changed very little.

When the results of Table 3 are compared with those of Table 4, it is evident that ESTs are not emphasizing two areas of most concern to FYTs. The two most difficult problems, amount of paperwork and lack of personal time, were ranked 9th and 13th respectively in terms of EST support. To determine the strength of these differences, t tests were computed to compare the strength of problems as perceived by FYTs and the extent of EST assistance, as perceived by FYTs. These data are included in Table 5.

When FYTs rated the strength of their problems and the extent of EST assistance in solving those problems, significant differences resulted in 11 of the 14 problem areas. For 8 of these 11 areas, the extent of EST assistance exceeded the perceived strength of the problems. ESTs did not provide assistance that matched the strength of the problem in three areas. Personal financial problems was the first, and one in which one would not expect ESTs to provide direct assistance (although many did provide emotional support when finances were being discussed). The other two areas, amount of paperwork and lack of personal time, are areas that experienced teachers could be of considerable assistance to neophytes.

Table 5: Strength of FYT Problems and Extent of EST Assistance as Perceived by FYTs

	Strength of FYT Problem Mean	Extent of Perceived EST Assistance Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.71	3.08*	2.58	.011
Student Motivation	2.19	2.76*	3.92	.000
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.91	2.98		
Personal Financial Problems	2.35*	1.49	5.47	.000
Managing Teacher Time	2.42	2.69		
Parent Co-operation	2.61	2.47		
Amount of Paperwork	3.15*	2.54	4.32	.000
School Administration	1.57	2.95*	8.57	.000
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.68	2.68*	6.11	.000
Lack of Personal Time	3.01*	2.13	5.68	.000
Student Involvement	2.21	2.53*	2.14	.034
Burn-Out	2.05	2.49*	2.90	.004
Peer Acceptance	1.28	2.69*	9.10	.000
Grading Students	1.79	2.80*	7.21	.000

Ways in Which Experienced Support Teachers Worked With First-Year Teachers

The third research question was: **To what extent and in what areas did FYTs perceive their ESTs to have assisted them?** This research question was addressed in three ways. First, FYTs were asked to rate the effectiveness of the assistance provided by ESTs and the effectiveness of their coaching. Second, ten areas were listed and FYTs asked to rate the extent of EST assistance in each area. Third, FYTs were asked in an open-ended question to identify the ways ESTs had helped them during their first year of school. Findings from each of these three data sources are discussed in this section.

EST Assistance and Effectiveness

Two questions asked FYTs to rate the effectiveness of EST assistance in general and their effectiveness as a coach. These data are included in Table 6.

Table 6: Assistance provided by ESTs as Perceived by FYTs

	Frequency	Percent
Assistance Provided by EST		
No contribution; may have impeded my growth	10	4
Somewhat helpful	37	16
Supportive; gave me ideas and information	90	38
Made my beginning days of school much easier	52	22
Outstanding, could not have survived without EST	50	21
Mean = 3.40; S.D. = 1.11		
Effectiveness as a Coach		
Very Ineffective	24	10
Ineffective	24	10
Adequate	59	25
Effective	59	25
Very Effective	73	31
Mean = 3.56; S.D. =1.29		

Forty-three percent of FYTs felt their ESTs had been very positive influences on their careers as teachers. However, 20 percent of them believed their EST had not been of much assistance. More than half (56%) indicated that their ESTs were effective or very effective as coaches for beginning teachers while 20 percent considered them ineffective. FYTs were slightly more positive at the end of the year than after two months of school.

FYT Ratings of Support by EST in Identified Areas

Support teachers helped first-year teachers in specific areas other than with problems. Table 7 summarizes data on the extent to which ESTs were perceived by FYTs as being helpful in areas identified in previous research as being important to FYTs (Odell, 1989, p. 31). FYTs used the following scale in assessing ESTs support: greatly assisted me (5); some assistance (3); or no assistance (1). Mean ratings, standard deviations, and ranks are included in Table 7.

ESTs were perceived by FYTs to provide greater support in areas other than those identified as problems. Only three of ten areas had mean ratings less than 3.00 -- help with *classroom environment* (M = 2.66), *advice on working with parents* (M = 2.84), and *advice on scheduling and planning* (M = 2.99). The highest ranked areas of assistance were *emotional support* (3.65), *systems information* (M = 3.46), and *instructional information* (M = 3.42).

Table 7: Assistance by Experienced-Support Teachers of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Systems Information	3.46	1.50	2
Mustering Resources	3.27	1.50	5.5
Instructional Information	3.42	1.48	3
Emotional Support	3.65	1.48	1
Advice on Student Management	3.25	1.55	7
Advice on Scheduling and Planning	2.99	1.56	8
Help With the Classroom Environment	2.66	1.59	10
Demonstration Teaching	3.31	1.60	4
Coaching	3.27	1.56	5.5
Advice on Working with Parents	2.84	1.47	9

Areas from Odell, S. J. Developing support programs for beginning teachers. In L. Huling-Austin et al., Assisting the Beginning Teacher (p. 31). Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Qualitative Responses Concerning EST Assistance

First-year teachers were asked to list and describe the most important ways their ESTs had helped them in their first year of teaching. While FYTs rated lists of EST assistance, they also described their ESTs' assistance in response to an open-ended question. These statements were analyzed independently by a project co-investigator who was not involved in the data analysis of quantitative responses. Thus, the two views of EST assistance could remain independent of each other. Table 8 summarizes FYT responses, while a more detailed discussion of their responses is included in the following paragraphs.

Of the 236 first-year teachers answering the question on EST assistance, four percent made no response, six percent reported, as one respondent put it, "little or no help," and eight percent, used words such as "could not have survived without this help," and characterized the assistance as indispensable.

More specifically, 49 percent of the respondents identified emotional support by their ESTs as important. "Just knowing she was there for me" and "he cared and listened when I was really discouraged" were typical expressions of the 116 FYTs citing this help as being among the most important ways their ESTs had helped them.

Assistance with learning about the policies, procedures and expectations of the school and district was regarded as very important by 33 percent of the respondents. The same percentage (though not necessarily the same respondents) indicated that help with classroom management and organization were essential.

Nearly one-third (31%) of first-year teachers identified as most important, "generously sharing materials and ideas" and "advising on lesson planning and instructing students with success."

Table 8: Most important ways ESTs helped FYTs during year

Perceived General Extent of Assistance	**% of FTY Reporting**
No Response	4
Little or no help	6
Regarded help as indispensable	8

Most Important Ways of Assisting	**% of FYT Reporting**
Providing emotional support	49
Understanding policies, procedures, etc.	33
Establishing classroom management	33
Sharing materials, ideas, etc.	31
Planning, delivering instruction	31
Preparing for assessment	16
Evaluating students; reporting to parents	13
Observing ESTs	11
Being observed by ESTs	10

Sixteen percent (16%) of the first-year teachers noted that assistance in preparing for assessment was very important to them, typified by the respondent who wrote, "She looked over my lesson and gave me pointers on what my assessor would look for."

Help in evaluation of students and reporting to parents was regarded as significant by 13 percent of the FYTs: "My support teacher sat in on a particularly difficult parent conference and that meant a lot to me," wrote one FYT.

Observations by and of FYTs and ESTs were each considered very helpful by approximately 10 percent of the FYTs reporting: "She helped me by coming in and watching what I was doing and gave me tips that solved some of my problems," and "I learned how to help children who had a hard time learning by watching what she did" were representative statements of the assistance rendered by opportunities for mutual observations.

In summary, while FYTs considered specific areas of support (e.g., classroom management, instructional skills) as important to their success, it was the more general contribution of emotional support that was considered most important by the largest number of FYTs.

These data should by very helpful to ESTs. In October, FYTs were more concerned with specific assistance (e.g., offering materials, advice on classroom management). It may be that, in the first months of teaching, emotional support is provided through very specific and concrete ways. These specific areas were cited in the October responses as more highly valued than "emotional support."

However, six months later, FYTs valued the more general "emotional support." Is it possible that this emotional support is made apparent to FYTs through the many occasions when ESTs make themselves available for specific acts of assistance in the more tangible areas of need acknowledged in the literature, over the year? The results of this evaluation may, if shared with ESTs in a constructive way, help them to be more aware of the ways in which their contributions can make a decisive difference in the development of their novice partners.

Recommendations Concerning Experienced Support Teacher Assistance

The fourth study question was: **In what ways did FYTs suggest that ESTs could have been of more assistance?** Table 9 summarizes the responses of 207 FYTs to this question; their written responses are discussed in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

Analysis of 207 first-year teachers' (FYTs') answers to the question of how their experienced support teachers (ESTs) might have been of more assistance during this initial teaching year indicated that 42 percent of the FYTs said that their ESTs had done everything possible to assist them.

Those who did identify perceptions of unmet needs made statements that suggest considerations by future ESTs and by those providing preparation for the candidates of the mentoring role. These unmet needs were identified as follows.

1. More intensive and ongoing help in the specific areas of teaching skills and strategies, classroom and time management, provision of materials, awareness of policies and paperwork, and evaluation of students was indicated as needed by 19 percent of those responding (sample statement: "she helped me, but it wasn't enough, and she was so busy I didn't want to bother her for more help.")

2. Thirteen percent (13%) of FYTs believed ESTs would have been of more assistance had they been in the same grade level/subject area, physical location, and practiced the same philosophy of education, and/or style of teaching. They considered these limitations, not as the fault of their ESTs ("she was teaching bilingual education and I am an ESL teacher; it was hard for her to help me"), but a limitation of the process of assignment. It suggests a need for review of this process by the principals who now are responsible for matching ESTs and FYTs.

Table 9: FYT Recommendations for Improving EST Assistance

General Response to Question	**% of FTY Reporting**
No Response	10
Little or no Change Needed in EST Assistance	42
Ways of Improving EST Assistance	**% of FYT Reporting**
BY MORE INTENSIVE HELP IN SPECIFIC AREAS (Teaching Skills, Classroom Management, Evaluation)	19
BY CLOSER "MATCH" (Grade/Subject Level, Location, Philosophies)	13
BY ESTs TAKING INITIATIVE	12
BY MORE TIME FOR HELPING PROCESS	8
BY MORE FREQUENT OBSERVATIONS FYT<--->EST	6
BY OFFERING MORE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	5
BY CONTACTING FYT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE	5

3. Twelve percent (12%) of the FYTs believed their ESTs should have taken more initiative in offering help. Wrote one FYT: "I needed to feel that she was more ready and anxious to help me;" wrote another "I didn't want to bother her but I was hoping she would offer to help me get ready for my assessment." This element of assistance was perceived in the first set

of responses (October) by FYTs, but not so clearly stated by as many respondents as in these April responses.

4. The need for more time "built into the program," as one FYT put it, for FYTs and ESTs to meet, plan, solve problems, etc. was expressed by 8 percent of respondents. Some indicated the need for "at least" having common preparation times; others saw the need for full days to observe each other in "normal teaching activities." Several others would have been helped by more time with ESTs "before the first day of school."

5. In addition to those who cited the need for more time for observations by and of FYTs and ESTs, six percent felt that more frequent observations of each other would be beneficial.

6. Five percent of those indicating how their ESTs might have been of more assistance cited emotional support. Three FYTs indicated a dearth of emotional support, while seven were more stressed by ESTs who "did not allow me the freedom to teach in my own style," "lectured or ordered," and/or "never praised one single thing I did." This problem may be related to more careful matching of ESTs and FYTs.

7. Having been assigned to an EST rather late in the school year was considered a severe limitation to assistance by five percent of the FYTs responding.

In summary, conclusions from the responses to this question might be drawn as follows:

1. Experienced support teachers, for the most part, have been very helpful to first-year teachers.

2. Some improvements in the system itself, such as better provision of shared FYTs/ESTs time, closer attention to matching FYTs/ESTs, and earlier assignments of ESTs to FYTs would likely enhance help to FYTs.

3. Early orientation of ESTs and FYTs (either together or separately) toward the felt needs of FYTs, and the most constructive ways for ESTs to offer and FYTs to ask for help, may enable ESTs to be of more assistance to their FYTs.

4. More sensitive mechanisms might be provided by which changes in the pairing of FYTs and ESTs would take place in a professional, interactive process, maximizing the potential for helping FYTs. Such mechanisms, in extreme cases, might include ways for FYTs to change ESTs without trauma in the school context.

Recommendations for Changing the Support System

The fifth question of the study was, **In what ways did FYTs suggest the support system could be improved?** Data in Table 10 summarize responses of 238 FYTs to this question.

Table 10: Suggestions for Improving the Support System by FYTs

General Response to Question	% of FYT Reporting
No Response	14
No need for change because it is exactly what is needed	18
Ways of Improving Support System	**% of FYT Responding**
IMPROVED MATCHING OF FYTs AND ESTs (re: grade level, subject area, etc.)	35
MORE TIME FOR HELPING PROCESS	23
IDENTIFY AND SPECIFY EST AND FYT RESPONSIBILITIES	19
MORE CAREFUL SELECTION OF ESTs	17
EARLIER ASSIGNMENTS OF ESTs AND FYTs	10
INCREASED COMMUNICATION (FYTs <--->ESTs)	9
CONFIDENTIALITY IN FYT-EST RELATIONSHIP	3
NEED FOR INCREASED FUNDS	2
NEED FOR ADDITIONAL HELP BY OTHERS	1

Fourteen percent (14%) of FYTs made no suggestions for improving the HISD support program, while 18 percent made no suggestions, but clearly stated that was because they felt the program, as experienced, needed no improvement; it was, in a typical statement, "everything a first-year teacher could possibly want it to be."

1. Of the 161 respondents making suggestions, 35 percent pointed out the need for better matching of FYTs and experienced support teachers (ESTs) in terms of grade level and/or subject area (19%), physical proximity within the school (9%), and philosophical beliefs about education (4%). One respondent felt that age should be a consideration, and two saw sharp differences in ability levels of the classes of paired teachers as an obstacle to the helping process.

2. The need for more time for FYTs and ESTs to work together was expressed by 23 percent of respondents identifying improvements to be made. More specifically, suggestions included (a) more time to work together in the classroom before the first day of school, (b) provision for regular and sufficient common planning times in the schedule, (c) increase of time scheduled for the special support needs of FYTs, and (d) greater provision for time for full-day observations by and of ESTs, of and by FYTs.

Some respondents making these suggestions also suggested that providing increased helping time could be accomplished by (a)increased teacher aide time assigned to the FYT/EST team, (b) shared substitutes to enable mutual observations, (c) fewer workshops after school, and (d) reduced responsibilities (e.g., smaller classes, lower course loads) for ESTs.

3. Possibly related to the need for more shared time for the helping process was a more specific recommendation, by 20 percent of FYTs making suggestions, for more intensive assistance in the areas of sharing materials, classroom management, instructional skills and strategies, preparation for assessment, evaluation of students, and opportunities for observing each other. Two such respondents advocated team teaching by the FYT/EST pair to facilitate this "in-depth help in meeting the challenges of day-to-day teaching."

4. Nineteen percent (19%) of FYTs believed a clearer identification of the responsibilities of ESTs and FYTs would be beneficial. Many of the FYTs wrote of a sense of imposition as they considered requesting help from their busy ESTs because the FYTs were unsure of what help and time they had a right to expect from ESTs. Specific ways to facilitate this suggestion were articulated as "establishing guidelines," "holding joint workshops for clarification," and "developing a suggested timetable for certain types of assistance recognized to be essential, but not necessarily all at the same time."

5. Many (19%) of the FYTs recommended that the selection of ESTs should be made more carefully with screening for attitudes toward teaching, willingness to serve (a number of respondents said that ESTs "should not be drafted"), sincerity of the helping motive, teaching capabilities, and qualities of empathy.

Related to this recommendation were specific remedies suggested such as (a) providing "a mechanism for change of ESTs if the pairing doesn't work," (b) letting "new teachers choose their own mentors," and (c) "meetings of beginning teachers to share and solve problems together." This suggested area of improvement was related to the suggestion for better matching of FYTs and ESTs.

6. Improvement of the program, according to 10 percent of the respondents making suggestions, would result from earlier assignments of ESTs to FYTs. In a number of cases, ESTs were not assigned to FYTs until well into the school year, by which time many FYTs felt their needs had already passed.

7. Somewhat related to the needs for more time, intensive assistance, and clarification about responsibilities of both ESTs and FYTs is the need for increased communication between FYTs and ESTs, as articulated by 9 percent of the FYTs offering suggestions.

Specifically identified as possible tools to accomplish this were (a) "early and ongoing workshops attended jointly by both the support teacher and the first-year teachers," (b) a "hot line" for sharing problems when they occur, and (c) joint meetings early in the process to "identify the kinds of help first-year teachers perceive to be needed."

Beyond these seven suggestions, between one and three percent of FYTs offering recommendations to improve the support program indicated (a) the importance of increased emphasis on trust and confidentiality in the FYT/EST relationship, (b) the desirability of making other sources of help (e.g., from administrators, secretaries, aides) readily and graciously available to a first-year teacher, and (c) the need for providing funds for increased stipends for ESTs and also for additional supplies for FYTs, especially at the beginning of the year.

In summary, it would appear that the 1989-90 program to support beginning teachers has made propitious strides toward its goals. At the same time, there have been, from the perspectives of these beginning teachers, points at which the program could have been more helpful: greater attention to matching FYTs and ESTs; scheduled time for the interactions of FYTs and ESTs, especially before beginning the year and in the early months; more intensive assistance in those areas where some assistance was given and highly valued; clearer identification of specific responsibilities and expectations of both FYTs and ESTs in the support process; greater care in the selection of ESTs; and earlier, more prompt assignments of ESTs to FYTs.

Perceived Outcomes of the Support System

Several questions probed FYTs' perception of confidence and satisfaction as teachers and their future plans. Two of the research questions guided these survey questions: **6. To what extent did FYTs feel confident and satisfied at the end of their first year of teaching? 7. What vocational plans did FYTs have at the end of their first year of teaching?**

Table 11: FYT Confidence, Satisfaction, and Future Plans

	Frequency	Percent
Confidence as a Teacher		
Not at all confident as a teacher	5	2
Some problems, but generally coping	22	9
As good as most first-year teachers	42	17
Confident as a teacher	111	46
Very confident, an effective teacher	61	25
Satisfied as a Teacher		
Not at all satisfied	4	2
Not satisfied	23	10
Neutral	33	14
Satisfied	118	50
Very satisfied	59	25
Continuing to Teach		
Probably my last year in HISD	20	9
Probably my last year to teach	2	1
Probably teach no more than 5 years	44	19
Probably stay in educ throughout career	166	71
Plans In Five Years		
Teaching	120	51
Educational specialist	61	26
School Administrator	23	10
Employed outside education	21	9
Temporarily/permanently out of work force	9	4
Choice of Teaching or Another Career		
Definitely would stay in teaching	142	59
Probably stay but after weighing all options	59	24
Would likely choose another occupation	23	10
Definitely would choose another occupation	7	3
Don't really know which I would do	11	5

Over three-fourths (88%) of FYTs are as confident as most first-year teachers, and 71 percent are quite confident. Eleven percent (11%) of them, however, are having problems but generally coping. In terms of their satisfaction, 75 percent are satisfied or very satisfied, 14 percent neutral, and 12 percent dissatisfied. FYTs were both more confident and more satisfied in *April than October.*

Three-fourths (71%) of FYTs plan to remain in education throughout their lives and another 19 percent for less than five years. More than half (51%) plan to continue teaching while 36 percent plan to move into administrative or supervisory roles within the next five years. Thirteen percent (13%) do not plan to be teaching in five years, an increase from the fall. To follow up on this, the April survey included another question, "If you had the opportunity to make a choice at this time, would you rather stay in teaching or choose another occupation?" Their responses were interesting: 59 percent would definitely stay in teaching and another 24 percent probably do so, but 10 percent would likely choose another career and 3 percent would definitely choose another career.

Differences in Problems of FYTs Planning to Leave and Those Planning to Continue Teaching

We were curious to find out if first-year teachers who planned to continue teaching viewed their problems and the assistance by ESTs differently from those who indicated they planned not to continue teaching. To study this problem, we posed this question: **8. What differences, if any, are there in perceived problems and assistance of teachers who plan to continue teaching and those who would enter another career?**

To answer this question, we selected the responses of the 30 FYTs who indicated they would definitely or likely choose another occupation and compared them with those of 120 FYTs who indicated they definitely would remain in teaching.

When the following characteristics were compared, there were no statistical differences between FYTs planning to continue teaching and those planning to leave teaching. Table 12 summarizes their responses to the set of problems FYTs face.

Four of 14 t tests were significant: *managing teacher time, amount of paperwork, student involvement*, and *burn-out*. Those who would choose another career reported greater problems for these factors than those FYTs planning to continue teaching.

None of the t tests related to EST assistance were significant. Apparently, there were no differences in the perceived assistance received by those planning to quit and those planning to teach their entire lives.

Table 12: Differences in Perceived Problems of Teachers Who Plan to Continue Teaching and Those Who Plan to Enter Another Career

	Those Who Plan for Another Career Mean	Those Who Plan to Continue Teaching Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.77	2.39		
Student Motivation	2.46	1.80		
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	3.31	2.72		
Personal Financial Problems	2.38	2.10		
Managing Teacher Time	3.00*	2.06	2.33	.036
Parent Cooperation	2.38	2.37		
Amount of Paperwork	3.77*	2.81	2.13	.050
School Administration	1.62	1.37		
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.77	1.54		
Lack of Personal Time	3.62	2.70		
Student Involvement	2.85*	1.77	2.20	.046
Burn-Out	2.69*	1.44	2.77	.016
Peer Acceptance	1.62	1.16		
Grading Students	2.23	1.60		

Conclusions

Based on the perceptions of first-year teachers after having taught for eight months, the following conclusions can be drawn. The confluence of these conclusions provide a direction for improving future programs.

1. The major problems identified by FYTs in April were *amount of paperwork, lack of personal time, lack of adequate materials and equipment, managing the classroom,* and *parent cooperation.*

2. While the order of problems changed very little between October and April, FYTs indicated they were less severe.

3. FYTs identified as the problems with which ESTs assisted them with most during the year, *classroom management, materials and equipment, grading students,* and *working with school administration.*

4. ESTs did not provide the assistance FYTs needed in their two most difficult problems, *amount of paperwork* and *lack of personal time.*

5. ESTs were of most assistance in areas such as *emotional support, systems information,* and *instructional information.* These three areas were verified as most important by responses to open-ended questions. Nearly half (49%) identified emotional support as the most important assistance they received. One-third noted that help with policies, procedures and expectations of the school and district (systems information) was the most important assistance. Finally, one-third indicated that help with instruction, e.g., classroom management and organization was essential, while 31 percent described assistance with lesson plans and sharing materials.

6. After 2 months of teaching, FYTs listed specific instances of assistance as most important, but 6 months later, the more general emotional support was most valued.

7. About half of FYTs believed ESTs had been of considerable assistance and an effective coach; however, 20 percent as of modest assistance and ineffective as a coach.

8. FYTs believed that ESTs could have been of more assistance had ESTs: (a) Provided more intensive help in specific areas of need; (b) been better matched by grade, subject, location, and philosophy of education; (c) taken the initiative; been more proactive; and (d) devoted more time to the relationship.

9. FYTs believed the program would have been improved had: (a) FYTs and ESTs been better matched; (b) increased provision for time be made, including time before school began to work in the classroom, regular and adequate common planning times during the year, time provided for special assistance in time of need, and time for observations of each other teaching; (c) specific responsibilities of ESTs and FYTs be delineated; (d) more careful selection of ESTs; (e) earlier assignments of ESTs to FYTs; and (f) increased communication between ESTs and FYTs.

10. FYTs are confident and satisfied; 88 percent are at least as confident as most first-year teachers, while 75 percent are satisfied with teaching as a career.

11. Nearly three-fourths of FYTs (71%) consider teaching as their lifetime career.

12. FYTs planning to leave teaching have greater problems than those planning to continue teaching as a career in four areas: *paperwork, managing teacher time, involving students, and burn-out.*

STUDY 90-10

PERCEPTIONS OF EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHERS AT THE END OF EIGHT MONTHS OF SCHOOL OF THEIR ASSISTANCE TO FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS

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This study explores several questions related to the improvement of support programs for first-year teachers. The perceptions of experienced support teachers provides interesting insights into the program. Each had been teaching for a number of years, each was considered an effective teacher by the administration, and each had agreed to work with a first-year teacher.

The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. The present study analyzes the perceptions of experienced support teachers after having worked with first-year teachers for eight months. The specific questions that directed this study include:

1. What were the major problems of first-year teachers (FYTs) during their first eight months as perceived by their experienced support teachers (ESTs)?

2. To what extent did ESTs perceive they had been of assistance to FYTs in solving these problems?

3. To what extent and in what areas did ESTs perceive they had assisted FYTs?

4. In what ways did ESTs perceive they could have been of greater assistance during the first year?

5. What recommendations did ESTs propose for improving the induction support program?

Characteristics and Teaching Assignments of Experienced Support Teachers

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the experienced support teachers who participated in this study. Their gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, and teaching assignments are included.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Experienced Support Teachers

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	28	9
Female	303	91
Age		
21-25	6	2
26-30	36	11
31-35	57	17
36-40	64	19
41-45	44	13
46-50	47	14
51-55	25	7
56-60	20	6
60+	8	2
Not indicated	32	9
Marital Status		
Single	68	20
Married	208	63
Divorced	57	17
Racial or Ethnic Identification		
Black, not of Hispanic origin	134	40
Hispanic	53	16
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	0
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3	1
White, not of Hispanic origin	144	43
Teaching Assignment		
Preschool-Grade 3	180	55
Elementary Grades 4-6	72	22
Middle School/Jr. High	33	10
Senior High School	42	13

Experienced support teachers were primarily women (91% female), and their mean age was 41.29 with a S.D. of 10.45 years. Sixty-three percent

(63%) of the ESTs were married, the remainder either single or divorced. Forty-three percent (43%) were White, 40 percent Black, and 16 percent Hispanic. About three-fourths of ESTs (77%) taught in elementary schools, with 55 percent of the ESTs teaching in the primary grades.

Major Problems of First-year Teachers

The first question explored in this study was: **What were the major problems of first-year teachers (FYTs) during their first eight months as perceived by their experienced support teachers (ESTs)?** A series of problems were included in the survey and experienced support teachers were asked to rate each of them as: a major problem (5), a problem (3), or not a problem (1) for their FYT. The mean ratings of these problems are included in Table 2.

Table 2: Problems of First-Year Teachers as Perceived by Experienced Support Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	2.79	1.49	1
Student Motivation	1.95	1.23	7
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	1.96	1.25	6
Personal Financial Problems	1.57	1.12	10.5
Managing Teacher Time	2.25	1.21	3
Parent Cooperation	1.99	1.28	5
Amount of Paperwork	2.68	1.33	2
School Administration	1.39	.91	12
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.36	.87	13
Lack of Personal Time	2.04	1.28	4
Student Involvement	1.92	1.17	8
Burn-out	1.79	1.17	9
Peer Acceptance	1.28	.82	14
Grading Students	1.57	.96	10.5

ESTs believed the major single problems of FYTs were *managing the classroom* (M = 2.79) and the *amount of paperwork* (M = 2.68). *Managing teacher time* was third (M = 2.25) and *lack of personal time* fourth (M = 2.04). Not generally perceived as problems were *peer acceptance* (M = 1.28), *lack of teaching freedom* (M = 1.36), and *school administration* (M = 1.39). While the relative order of problem seriousness remained essentially the same as after two months, the mean ratings were lower in 13 of 14 scales. ESTs believed problems of first-year teachers were less severe than near the beginning of school.

Experienced Support Teacher Assistance In Solving FYT Problems

To what extent did ESTs perceive they had been of assistance to FYTs in solving these problems? ESTs were asked to respond to these same problem areas using the scale: Greatly assisted the FYT (5); Of some assistance (3); or Of no assistance (1). Table 3 includes mean ratings of experienced support teachers.

Table 3: Support by ESTs in Solving Problems of First-Year Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Managing the Classroom	3.39	1.14	1
Student Motivation	2.93	1.08	2
Lack of Adequate Materials and Equipment	2.82	1.29	4
Personal Financial Problems	1.32	.90	14
Managing Teacher Time	2.78	1.14	5
Parent Cooperation	2.37	1.20	10
Amount of Paperwork	2.56	1.21	8
School Administration	2.62	1.28	6
Lack of Teaching Freedom	2.33	1.17	11
Lack of Personal Time	2.11	1.20	13
Student Involvement	2.60	1.20	7
Burn-out	2.51	1.30	9
Peer Acceptance	2.21	1.37	12
Grading Students	2.89	1.33	3

The problem with which ESTs perceived they were of most assistance to FYTs was in *managing the classroom* (M = 3.39). This was the only area with a mean greater than 3.00, Of some assistance. *Student motivation* (M = 2.93) and *grading students* (M = 2.89) were second and third in EST perception of their support of FYTs. *Lack of adequate materials* was fourth (M = 2.82) and *managing teacher time*, fifth (M = 2.78). ESTs perceived they provided least assistance with *personal financial problems* (M = 1.32). *Peer acceptance* and *lack of personal time* were also problem areas with which ESTs provided little assistance to FYTs.

Ways in Which Experienced Support Teachers Work With First-Year Teachers

The third question explored in this study was **To what extent and in what areas did ESTs perceive they had assisted FYTs?** Because of the importance of this question, ESTs were asked to respond in two ways. First, they were asked to rate their assistance in ten areas. Second, they were asked in an open-ended question to list the most important ways they had helped their first-year teachers during the year. Their responses to these two questions are summarized in this section of the report.

Assistance in Specified Areas

A number of areas have been identified as ones in which experienced support teachers have helped first-year teachers. Table 4 summarizes data on the extent to which ESTs perceived their assistance was helpful. They used the following scale in assessing their support: Greatly assisted FYT (5); Of some assistance (3); or Of no assistance (1). Mean ratings, standard deviations and ranks for each area of assistance are included.

Table 4: Extent of Assistance to FYTs
As Perceived by Experienced Support Teachers

	Mean	S.D.	Rank
Systems Information	4.08	1.13	2
Mustering Resources	3.57	1.24	5
Instructional Information	3.85	1.28	3
Emotional Support	4.09	1.16	1
Advice on Student Management	3.64	1.27	4
Advice on Scheduling and Planning	3.45	1.29	6
Help with the Classroom Environment	2.82	1.42	10
Demonstration Teaching	3.27	1.60	8
Coaching	3.41	1.39	7
Advice on Working with Parents	2.91	1.22	9

From Odell, S. J. Developing support programs for beginning teachers. In L. Huling-Austin et al. Assisting the Beginning Teacher (p. 31). Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

The extensiveness of assistance in the areas included in Table 4 were rated greater by ESTs than problem areas. For example, in assistance with problems (Table 3), only one area had a mean rating of 3.00 or greater, while eight of the means in Table 4 were greater than 3.00 and two were greater than 4.00. With one exception, means of the April appraisal were less than those of the October assessment; however, the differences were not statistically significant, and the statistical phenomena called attrition toward the mean could account for these differences. The rank order of assistance areas remained constant between the two surveys.

Areas of greatest assistance were *emotional support* (M = 4.09), and *systems information* (M = 4.08), followed by *instructional information* (M = 3.85). ESTs felt they were of least assistance in helping with the *classroom environment* (M = 2.82) and *advice on working with parents* (M = 2.91).

Assistance Provided During the Year

In responses to an open-ended question, experienced support teachers described the most important ways they had helped their FYTs since school began. The support they provided, in order of number of incidents, can be categorized as nine areas: classroom management and organization; instructional skills and strategies; emotional support; procedures, policies and expectations; materials, supplies and equipment; observations of ESTs and others by FYTs; student evaluation and reporting to parents; preparation for TTAS assessment; and observations of FYTs by ESTs. These are summarized in Table 5, and discussed in the paragraphs following.

Analyses of open-ended questions were made independently of statistical analyses so that data from one aspect of the study would not affect findings from another. One of the co-investigators analyzed initially the data from open-ended questions without knowledge of the results of statistical analyses of rating scales.

Table 5: Responses by ESTs to Open-ended Question Identifying the Most Important Ways They Helped FYTs

Most Important Ways ESTs Helped FYTs	Percent of ESTs Reporting In Each Area
Classroom management and organization	49
Instructional skills and strategies	44
Emotional support	39
Procedures, policies, and expectations	36
Materials, supplies, and equipment	30
Observations of ESTs and others by FYTs	23
Student evaluation and reporting to parents	18
Preparation for TTAS assessment	13
Observations of FYTs by ESTs	10

Of the 325 responding experienced support teachers (ESTs), one percent did not answer this particular question, and gave no indication of the reason(s) for not answering. It may be noted that this was the smallest percentage of "no answers" to any of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Each of the areas in Table 5 are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Classroom Management and Organization

Among the 49 percent of ESTs indicating this area of help to FYTs as most important, specific reports of activities included "helped her to understand the physical/social/economic/academic make-up of her class;" "I gave her the option of sending problem students to my class;" "suggested classroom furniture arrangements, at least to start with;" "shared my system for saving time in organizing routines;" "advised him on the best way of handling a hyperactive student."

In a few instances, the responding ESTs indicated discussing "options" or "choices" of ways of management and organization. For the most part, however, responses reflected the sense of the EST "telling" the novice what and how to function in this area. The implications of this difference in approach might be worth exploring in future preparation of ESTs for their role.

Instructional Skills and Strategies

The 44 percent of ESTs who identified their assistance in this area as very important specifically pointed to: sharing lesson plans and working together to write lesson plans; especially at the beginning, helping the beginning teacher have realistic expectations for the number of students who could be reached; identifying students with special needs; varying methods to teach a concept; and meeting multilevel needs.

A number of references were to, as one EST wrote, "explaining more clearly how to use Project Access in teaching curriculum objectives in an integrated way." It should be noted that new teachers were introduced to Project Access before the beginning of the school year, and they were undoubtedly trained, preprofessionally, in the instructional skills and strategies mentioned above. This suggests the importance of the FYTs having a resource (ESTs) to help them to apply what has, theoretically, been learned.

Emotional Support

The offering of help with emotional problems was seen by 39 percent of the ESTs as one of the most important ways they had helped their FYTs during the year. Earlier in the year, their open-ended responses on this issue attributed much less importance to this area of assistance.

In this reflective mode, one EST wrote: "The main thing I have been able to offer the first-year teacher is simply the understanding that the problems he is facing are very much common to all beginning teachers, and not so much due to deficits in ability to teach." Others wrote of sharing their own problems as beginning teachers with their FYTs as a way of support.

The themes of "just being there," "making myself available in an ongoing way," "helping her to feel it's OK to make a mistake," and "assuring her that it does get easier and better" were threaded through the responses that pointed to offering emotional support as a very important way of helping. One respondent felt that making herself available through telephone accessibility to her FYT was very supportive in this area.

Recognition was given to the role of ESTs as working toward becoming a "trusted friend" of FYTs by expressing genuine appreciation for their strengths, offering support at school-wide functions where the "FYT might feel like an outsider," as one EST wrote, and the EST acknowledging learning from the FYT.

In reading these responses one gets the impression that the ESTs, given the opportunity to look back and reflect, were somewhat surprised to realize the importance of help in this area.

Procedures, Policies, and Expectations

One of the 36 percent of the responding ESTs who considered this area as one of the most important ways they had helped their FYTs this year wrote, "It was terribly important for her to 'know the ropes' and I helped her to do that."

Helping FYTs to "know the ropes," according to these ESTs included briefing them on interrelationships and "politics" within the school community, "playing the principal's game" (as one put it), showing where equipment and materials are located and/or how they are obtained, guiding them through the maze and deadlines of paperwork and record keeping, etc.

There is always the possibility that the perspectives of ESTs in this area may be biased and may influence FYTs in ways that are not to their advantage. However, since the question was designed to obtain the ESTs' perspectives on important ways they helped the FYTs, this summary is important.

Materials, Supplies, and Equipment

The 30 percent of the ESTs who indicated that assistance in this area was a most important way of helping their FYTs identified "introducing my beginning teacher to the Media Center and working with her there" and "showing her how to use Teachers' Editions of textbooks" as examples of specific actions.

Sharing materials that the EST had collected over many years was mentioned as important; one EST wrote that she "shared everything from one sticker to 22 bottles of glue" with her FYT.

Observations of ESTs and Others by FYTs

Some ESTs implied that observations of FYTs were mandatory in the program. Many of the 23 percent of ESTs who viewed this form of assistance as very important wrote of "giving demonstration lessons" which were especially meaningful if the lessons were presented to the students of the FYT. Such modeling appeared to be differentiated in the responses from help with instructional skills and strategies, although there is an obvious overlap.

One respondent reported demonstrating "for two full days early in the year," although it was unclear as to how this was arranged. In another example, an EST wrote "I taught for one hour each day in her classroom as a Chapter I Read-In Teacher, and, therefore, was able to model many effective teaching strategies."

Student Evaluation and Reporting to Parents

Eighteen percent (18%) of ESTs regarded as a most important way of helping their FYTs the guidance they gave in evaluating student achievement fairly and in reporting student progress to parents, particularly during "Fail-Safe" days.

Several mentioned teaching their FYTs "shortcuts on grading papers" but did not describe these. A few others advised their FYTs on reasonable expectations for involving parents in concerns about student conduct.

Preparation for the TTAS Assessment

Among the 13 percent of ESTs who regarded help in this area as a most important kind of assistance, there were those who expressed awareness of the fear, as one put it, "that beginning teachers have of being assessed, especially the first time." Another regarded this help as the "greatest need of all of a first-year teacher." Many referred to the importance of giving the FYTs pointers on achieving a positive assessment.

When FYTs responded to the open-ended question, they were far more likely to regard this area as one where help was most important. This may be a crucial area about which ESTs should be oriented.

Observations of FYTs by ESTs

Only 10 percent of the responding ESTs regarded observations (and presumably feedback afterwards) of their FYTs as an important way of helping.

These 10 percent who regarded this as important wrote of the strong positive effects of "constructive feedback," in the words of one, and of the importance to "coaching" and of "getting to know the children in my beginning teacher's class" as others wrote.

One might well ask why this way of helping appeared to be unimportant to 90 percent of the respondents. Is it possible that this is because many ESTs do not know how to use instruments of observation, to do what is essentially clinical supervision?

If this is contrasted to the 23 percent who regarded the FYTs' observation of the EST as important, it may be that it is easier for the EST to show how he/she teaches than to analyze the FYT's teaching in ways that will encourage growth.

Additional Comments

Not only did more respondents (in fact, 99%) answer this question about the activities of their support than answered any of the other open-ended questions, but their responses were longer and more detailed. It may have been easier for them to describe the most important ways they had helped their first-year teachers during the school year than to recommend changes in the program or in their services.

Because of their more detailed answers to this question, it was possible to obtain a greater sense of the qualitative tone of the responses. Three characteristics of the helping process by ESTs stand out: (a) an authoritarian vs. a collaborative approach, (b) a sense of being the FYT's sole resource vs. securing augmented support for the FYT from others, and (c) a tendency for the EST to picture the FYT as dependent and weak vs. an acknowledgement of strengths and skills that the FYT brings to teaching.

The authoritarian tone was reflected in such comments as: "I told her how to handle a difficult student." "I allowed Mrs. B. to observe several lessons." "I taught him that assignments should be copied from the board."

In contrast, the comments of other ESTs indicated more of a collaborative, problem solving approach such as: "I shared different floor plan possibilities." "Together we discussed what to tell parents to help their child at home." "We discussed possible outcomes that would result from asking that a child be moved out of his class." "I helped D. to discover ways of being a better classroom manager in her own personal style."

Very few ESTs mentioned getting others involved in the helping process. In one case, the EST wrote, "The problem was solved when I was able to get the administration involved with the student, the family and the teacher." Another EST said that, in retrospect, she "should have gotten other people in the building to be more helpful to my first-year teacher."

Finally, there seemed to be a qualitative difference in attitude of those ESTs who, in answer to this question, wrote such comments, acknowledging their FYTs' contributions to the relationship and to their own professional development, as: "She has a positive attitude and seems to love teaching." "Since Sheryl proved to be such a good inductee . . . " "She started as a strong person and continued to grow tremendously throughout the year." "She had good ideas and just needed to learn how to put it all together into full-fledged lessons." "She is a great teacher and I'm thrilled to work with her."

These comments suggest different styles of EST/FYT relationships that may affect the effectiveness of the helping process, regardless of the area of need. Such considerations could be a constructive part of an FYT/EST joint orientation program, and also a part of the decision-making of principals in assigning ESTs in their schools.

Summary

Analysis of the responses to this open-ended question indicate that ESTs, reflecting near the end of the school year about their support, regarded themselves as having been of great assistance to their FYTs, not just in the day-to-day demands of teaching, but in providing the emotional support that enabled FYTs to meet those demands more effectively.

ESTs and FYTs viewed two areas of assistance differently. Only a few ESTs regarded *preparing for assessment* as important, while a larger number of FYTs, in their responses to this same question, regarded this as one of the most important areas. Likewise, a small number of ESTs regarded their *observations of FYTs* as important, in contrast to the larger proportion of FYTs who regarded this as important.

Recommendations for More Effective Support To First-Year Teachers

The fourth question probed in the study was: **In what ways did ESTs perceive they could have been of greater assistance during the first year?** Table 6 summarizes their responses to an open-ended question. Elaboration of the table follows it.

Table 6: Responses by ESTs to Open-ended Question Identifying Ways They Could Have Been of Greater Assistance to FYTs

Most Important Ways ESTs Could Have Helped FYTs	Percent of ESTs Reporting In Each Area
No further assistance needed	11
No answer	8
By giving more time	27
By giving more specific and indepth guidance (e.g., classroom management, instructional strategies, preparation for assessment)	23
By being better matched to FYT (e.g., grade level, teaching area, proximity)	20
By observing FYTs more often and giving more constructive feedback	17
By arranging for more observations of ESTs and others by FYTs	11
By providing more orientation earlier	8
By fostering more receptivity by FYTs	6
By providing more emotional support	3

Of the 325 ESTs who returned their questionnaires, 11 percent indicated that there were not any ways in which they could have been of more assistance to their FYTs; they had done everything possible to help the novices. No answer was given to this particular question by 8 percent of these ESTs, nor any reasons for not answering.

Of those who responded, there appeared to be two perspectives on the question: one had to do with the conditions of the program (such as insufficient built-in time) which prevented them from being of as much assistance as they could have been; the second perspective did not fault the conditions of the program, but rather indicated their own regret at not taking actions that could have made them more helpful (such as not making the time to be more available to the FYTs). In some areas of desiring to have been of more assistance, both the limited conditions of the program and individual responsibility were cited.

An analysis of the answers to this question revealed eight broad areas in which ESTs felt they could have been of more assistance to FYTs. These included: (a) giving more time; (b) giving more specific and indepth guidance; (c) being better matched to the FYT; (d) observing the FYT more often; (e) arranging for more observations of ESTs and others by FYTs; (f) providing more orientation earlier; (g) fostering more receptivity by FYTs; and (h) providing more emotional support.

Giving More Time

The 27 percent of ESTs who referred to regret at not having devoted more time to the needs of FYTs were divided between (a) those who attributed inadequate time to administrative or program failure to provide such time, and (b) those who felt, in the words of three ESTs, "I should have made the time;" "I will set aside time next year;" "I should have planned to use lunch times and time after school to help her more."

Of those who blamed lack of time on the functioning of the program itself, there were such statements as, "We should have been scheduled to have the same planning time;" "we should not have been scheduled for the same planning time so that we could have used the time to observe each other;" "the ESTs should have smaller classes if they are to have enough time to give their FYTs;" and "the program should have planned times for social, relaxed interactions between ESTs and FYTs."

Several ESTs wished there had been a frank discussion of time as related to the helping process during early orientation sessions involving ESTs and FYTs. Why more time was needed was not necessarily indicated by the 27 percent of the respondents who provided this answer. However, as they identified other actions they wished they had taken to help their FYTs, it became apparent that such actions, described in the following section, would have required more time.

Giving More Specific and in-depth Guidance

As ESTs looked back on the academic year, 23 percent expressed the view that their FYTs had needed, in the words of one, "More continuous advice on how to prevent management problems and how to deal with discipline problems;" of another "more careful instruction on how to handle paperwork in this school;" and still another, "a closer look at her lesson plans and how she carried them out."

A few ESTs wished they had made instructional materials with their FYTs. And one, reflecting the statements of several others, wrote "I wish I had been a little more firm insisting on his doing things the right way." Others indicated that they had learned more, during the year, about what were the really important needs of FYTs, such as "giving more help in preparing for her assessment."

The 23 percent of ESTs who felt they should have been more specific in their assistance may have done so because (a) they were not sufficiently aware of the needs of their FYTs, (b) they were aware of these needs, but did not have the time, or (c) poor matching in terms of grade level, subject or program areas, proximity or even personalities obstructed greater action on the parts of ESTs.

Being Better Matched to the FYT

Like the element of time, the element of matching reflects, to some extent, an attribute of the program rather than an action of the ESTs. The problem was mentioned by 20 percent of the respondents as a way in which they could have been of more assistance to their FYTs: had the pair been on the same grade level ("she is teaching 5th grade and I am teaching 3rd grade so I can't give help she needs in curriculum or demonstrate age-appropriate lessons," wrote one); had the pair been in the same program area ("as a regular classroom teacher helping a new bilingual teacher, I couldn't advise her on some important questions," wrote another); or had the pair been assigned nearby classrooms: wrote one, "I could have been aware of her needs in a natural ongoing way."

Thus, the more careful matching of EST and FYT is seen as a condition of the assistance program which would facilitate the actions of the ESTs in being of more help to their FYTs.

Observing the FYT More Often

Seventeen percent (17%) indicated that they should have observed their FYTs' teaching more often, which many referred to as a "coaching" activity. Not all of these ESTs said why they had not done so. Of those who did, there were statements such as, "I would liked to have been asked to come," "Our off-time schedules were the same so I would have needed a substitute for my class if I observed her," and "if I had spent time observing him, I would not have gotten my own work done."

It may also be that the ESTs' awareness of the importance of observing FYTs as an integral part of assisting them developed in retrospect; and perhaps, as well, the EST needed more preparation for the process of coaching or genuine clinical supervision.

Arranging for More Observations of ESTs and Others by FYTs

Observations of FYTs by ESTs has its counterpart in the opportunities offered to the FYTs to observe ESTs and other master teachers. Of the ESTs responding to this question, 11 percent regretted not having provided their FYTs more of these opportunities to observe demonstrations of quality teaching.

Once again, not having done so was attributed in some cases to program limitations: "Scheduling made it impossible," and "simply not enough time." Other ESTs saw it as their own limitation: "I offered but didn't follow up." And still another saw it as a weakness of the EST/FYT relationship: "My door was open; she didn't take advantage of it. I should have insisted."

It might be important to note that FYTs would have liked to see demonstration teaching by ESTs and other master teachers using the FYTs' students, as well as of their own students.

Providing More Orientation Earlier

Eight percent of ESTs indicated that earlier contact with their FYTs would have provided more assistance at a crucial time that would ultimately affect "what happened during the rest of the year," as one put it.

Once again this aspect of the helping process was attributed by some to a failure in the system, indicated by one statement, "a whole month went by without my knowing I was her mentor." Some pointed to a prolonged delay in the assignment of an EST to a FYT.

Others who saw this as a problem recognized their own failure to begin very early to get to know their FYTs, and to determine, early on, the felt needs of the person they were to help. Wrote one, "As I look back, I didn't realize her need for help and advice at the beginning of the year, even before the school year began."

Fostering More Receptivity by FYTs

A relatively small number of ESTs (6%), found their FYTs to be (a) resentful of offered assistance, or (b) hesitant to ask for help. Once again this was considered by some as a limitation of the conditions of the program, and by others as inadequacy of their own actions. Among those seeing it as a limitation of the program, it was felt, in the words of one, "First-year teachers and we should have early discussions on what the program is supposed to do and what our roles are expected to be."

One of those who felt that the EST individually needs to be proactive in this area wrote of her regret at not being "more initiating and making my first-year teacher understand that she has the right to come to me for help." Although none of the respondents blamed "mismatching" of personalities and style for this problem, there may be an implicit suggestion of this factor in this limitation of assistance.

Providing More Emotional Support

Only three percent of the responding ESTs indicated that being more emotionally supportive was a way that they could have been of greater assistance to their FYTs. Representative of the comments of those who did express this are as follows: "I should have taken more time to quietly talk to him about his problems." "I should have celebrated her birthday with more fanfare." "If I had been more experienced." "I should have encouraged the entire faculty and staff to be more friendly to her." "I should have been more open and warm in letting him know I am willing to help."

Clearly, such emotional support overlaps with some of the other areas of assistance; and it is possible that these other areas have within them the kernel of more emotional support. What is evident is that a large percentage of the responding ESTs had a sense of having given emotional support to their FYTs in adequate measure.

Summary

The reflections of 325 ESTs, toward the end of a full school year of assisting FYTs, include ideas for improving the program, and for preparing future ESTs to help novice teachers more effectively. The program, if it is to facilitate and improve the assistance to beginning teachers, needs to analyze its provisions for appropriate and flexible time for ESTs and FYTs to plan together, to observe each other, and to solve problems together.

Increased attention needs to be given to early expediting of assignments of ESTs to FYTs; and these assignments need to include considerations of appropriate matching, especially of grade level, program area and subject areas; thought might also be given to the elements of proximity, personality and teaching styles in the matching process. Is it possible that greater understanding of these factors on the part of principals would be indicated for greater future effectiveness?

The future EST can well be guided by the reflective responses of ESTs who speculated on how they could be of greater assistance. The importance of making time within busy schedules, offering more in-depth and specific help, arranging to coach FYTs and demonstrate skills to a greater extent, relating to FYTs at the earliest possible time, encouraging FYTs' receptivity to assistance, and finding more ways to offer emotional support -- all of these and more can be communicated to those undertaking the responsibilities of an EST to an FYT. Could not the most articulate of these ESTs take leadership roles in preparation sessions for other ESTs before the next school year begins?

Thus, it would appear that existing arrangements of the program need some adjustment, and the participants in the program need to reexamine their own roles and actions to work more effectively within the adjusted arrangements.

Recommendations for Improving the Program

The fifth research question was **What recommendations did ESTs propose for improving the induction support program?** The recommendations of 321 ESTs are summarized in this section.

Two questions probed whether or not the program should be continued and if so, would the ESTs be willing to participate. Their responses are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Continuance of Support Program

	Frequency	Percent
Should program be continued?		
Definitely not	3	1
Probably not	5	2
Yes, but very limited	23	7
Probably yes	81	24
Definitely yes	224	67
If continued, willing to work with FYT again?		
Definitely no	8	3
Probably no; would depend on conditions	21	7
Probably yes	86	28
Definitely yes, if asked	195	63

ESTs believed the program for FYTs should be continued; 91 percent said yes, 7 percent yes but in a limited way, and 3 percent no. Further, these ESTs would work with an FYT if assigned; 91 percent were willing while only 10 percent not willing.

Recommendations for Improving the Program

ESTs were asked in an open-ended question to make recommendations for improving the program. Their suggestions are summarized in Table 8, and discussed in the following paragraphs.

Of the 321 ESTs, 9 percent said the program is excellent just as it is, and made no recommendations for change. Ten percent did not answer this particular question, and gave no indication of their reason(s) for not answering.

Table 8: Recommendations by ESTs for Improving the Program

Area of Recommended Improvement	Percent of ESTs Reporting In Each Area
Excellent as is; no suggestions	9
No answer	10
More time needed	44
More training of ESTs for mentoring (including specific requirements)	16
Better matching of ESTs and FYTs	13
Augmented support for FYTs (from people and materials)	13
Earlier Assignments of ESTs; earlier contacts between ESTs and FYTs	8
Fostering positive EST/FYT relationships	8
More Money	7
More stringent EST selection process	2

An analysis of the recommendations offered indicate eight broad areas of suggestions, although there is some overlap as will be pointed out in the following paragraphs. The broad areas include references to (a) time; (b) EST training and requirements for mentoring; (c) matching of ESTs to FYTs; (d) augmented support; (e) earlier assignments of ESTs to FYTs; (f) fostering positive EST/FYT relationships; (g) money; and (h) EST selection process.

Time

By far, the largest number of respondents (44%) recommended that the program allocate increased time to the mentoring process. The recommendations in relation to time varied: the greatest expressed need was for more time for FYTs and ESTs to observe each other. Suggestions included setting aside several full days (ranging from one day per week to one day per month, to available full days "as needed") with the shared use of the services of a consistently available aide or substitute teacher to work with the class of the observer. Several respondents suggested having this time and service in lieu of "prescribed workshops which often do not talk to the specific problems the FYT is having, but do take up time and money," in the words of one EST.

ESTs suggested ways to increased time available: (a) ensure common planning time of ESTs and FYTs, (b) increase shared time in the program ("having to find a few minutes both can spare before the school day begins and after it ends is very difficult," wrote one; and another, "I need to use my planning period for my own planning; I need additional time for helping my FYT when she needs the help").

Needing more time for the FYT and EST to work together before the opening of school, and, as expressed by one "before the crowded schedule of the inservice week prior to the first day of classes" was indicated. Other ESTs recommended offering FYTs time for opportunities to observe other teachers in their own schools and in other schools.

A majority of those advocating more considerations of time as a significant element in the program favored increased and matching time as a structured part of the program. Others said, in the words of one, "We need flexibility in the use of time for helping our FYTs; some parts of the year they may need less time than other parts of the year."

EST Training and Requirements for Mentoring

Recommendations regarding training and requirements of ESTs for mentoring (made by 16 percent of respondents) ranged from those who wanted, as one such respondent put it "more workshops held earlier to get clear instructions about what we are expected to do," to expressions from those who had mentored before who suggested voluntary attendance at EST workshops for what one called "those of us who have done it before and for whom it is absolutely senseless to be required to attend."

Several suggestions referred to wanting to share inservice with the FYTs or in some other way to be made aware "of what the first-year teachers have been told." A number of ESTs wanted more flexibility in how often and when to observe their FYTs. One said "if the FYT is doing beautifully by January, why should we have to observe twice a month."

Matching

Recommendations regarding better matching of ESTs and FYTs in regard to proximity, grade level, subject area, special area, personality and gender were made by 13 percent of respondents. Many recommended the matching of planning time.

The greatest number had to do with the importance of having FYTs and ESTs paired according to grade level, subject and special area, and many within this group referred to what one termed "the difficulty of having a regular first grade teacher helping a special ed teacher or a special ed teacher trying to help a bilingual teacher."

To a lesser extent was the recommendation for close physical proximity of the rooms of FYTs and ESTs; as one respondent indicated, "it is much easier to have quick informal exchanges of help when the rooms are near each other." A much smaller number recommended more careful matching of personalities and educational philosophies of the pair: "My first-year teacher and I blended well, but I saw some pairs that really didn't see eye-to-eye on how to teach." Two respondents indicated possible concern for gender matching: "I might have been of more help to him had I been a male teacher."

Augmented Support

Many of the respondents who made recommendations regarding *time* and *matching* referred to the important role of the principal in implementing the support program. In addition to these references, 13 percent of ESTs cited the importance of augmented support for FYTs from administrators, other teaching colleagues, support staff, and others in the school environment. One EST put it this way: "It feels as though we (the ESTs) are completely responsible, that other people are not aware of the purposes and problems of the helping program, and not sensitive to what they too can do to help."

ESTs also urged that (a) steps be taken to acquaint everyone in the school with the program, (b) a brochure or guide be prepared with questions most likely to be asked by FYTs, (c) curriculum guides and teachers' editions of textbooks be provided to FYTs immediately upon assignment to school and class, (d) mutual support groups of FYTs be organized, (e) services of substitutes and aides be made available to FYTs in a clear and organized manner, and (f) Professional Development Specialists be more visible and "on call" for contributing to the FYT/EST helping process.

Earlier Assignments

Eight percent (8%) of ESTs suggested that the program would be improved if the assignment of the EST to the FYT be made as early as possible (many of those suggesting this stipulated that this be done "before school begins" or that the two meet "as soon as possible."

The issue of the need for joint orientation meetings for FYTs and ESTs who are paired at mid-year was raised by several of the ESTs. Beginning teachers employed in December or January, for example, may be assigned a new EST, and neither of them has been given adequate explanation of the program with its role responsibilities and expectations.

Fostering Positive EST/FYT Relationships

While building relationships between the EST and FYT may be related to the training of ESTs for mentoring, other factors were recommended by 8 percent of ESTs: time available for the pair to work together, improved matching of the two, and need for earlier assignments and contacts.

Included in statements of those making the suggestion were the need to prepare beginning teachers "to accept criticism;" "to be patient if response is not immediate;" "to not make the EST feel intrusive;" and "not to look elsewhere for help."

Some suggestions of ways to improve relationships included "providing combined social and professional occasions;" "having beginners and experienced teachers work in team-teaching situations;" "letting helping teachers know the same information as the new teachers are given;" and "letting first-year teachers choose whether or not they want to have an experienced teacher as a helper."

Money

More money for EST stipends and for providing needed materials (especially in the beginning of the year) was recommended by 7 percent of the ESTs. "The time and effort required to help beginning teachers is more than most people realize and we should receive more compensation for this" wrote one EST. Another wrote that there should be a "stipend for new teachers to purchase supplies for their classrooms. (K. spent a lot of money to purchase supplies that children's parents could not afford to buy to maintain their schooling.) She went to the Media Center, but you can't get tablets, crayons, pencils, etc. there."

There were also several references to the need of some FYTs, particularly those from out of state with no family close by, for financial assistance ("perhaps a loan, or other arrangement") during the first year.

More Stringent EST Selection Process

Two percent of the respondents recommended that there be "a more stringent screening process." This process, said another, should include "a realistic picture of the demands of time, including the mandatory workshops." This particular recommendation would appear to relate also to a clarification of the principal's effect on the support program since it is the principal who selects ESTs. It is important, wrote one respondent, "that the mentor really wants that role."

Summary

From the responses of ESTs, it appears that the program is generally achieving its goals. The change deemed most desirable is a coordinated effort to arrange for more available time, to some extent scheduled, and to some extent flexible in order for the paired FYTs and ESTs to plan together, to engage in constructive problem solving, to observe each other, and for the FYTs to observe other teachers.

To a lesser degree, it was recommended that more successful assistance to FYTs would result from (a) more thorough understanding by ESTs of what is required of them and how to best fulfil those requirements, (b) greater consideration given to matching pairs, especially in terms of grade level, subject area, etc., (c) fostering a broader climate of support for FYTs in the school and among groups of FYTs, and (d) a clearer view of the program and its requirements for success on the part of the principal.

Earlier assignments and contacts between FYTs and ESTs would facilitate improved assistance, with such contacts geared to establishing and maintaining positive interactions.

More money to compensate ESTs, as well as to provide necessary materials and supplies for FYTs to equip classrooms adequately was suggested. Finally, the selection process of ESTs should be reviewed to ensure that those selected are cognizant of the responsibilities and requirements of the role, and willing to undertake it.

Conclusions

1. Experienced support teachers believe the major problems of FYTs are *managing the classroom, amount of paperwork, managing teacher time,* and *lack of personal time.*

2. ESTs believed they were of most assistance in solving problems related to *managing the classroom.*

3. ESTs believed they assisted FYTs most with *emotional support, systems information* (procedures, policies, and expectations), and *instructional information* (classroom management, instructional skills, materials, supplies, and equipment).

4. Some ESTs blamed the conditions of the program for any problems; others considered any problems as their own.

5. ESTs indicated they could have been of more assistance had they given more time to their FYTs; provided more specific and indepth guidance; been better matched to their FYTs, and observed their FYT more.

6. ESTs made several recommendations for improving the program, with by far the greatest number suggesting that additional time be provided for ESTs and FYTs to work together. Other recommendations included a more thorough understanding of what is required and how to fulfill them,ESTs, better matching of FYTs and ESTs, and broader support for FYTs.

7. Nine out of ten ESTs believed the program should be continued, and would participate again if asked.

Study 90-11

EFFECTS OF EXPERIENCED SUPPORT TEACHER ASSISTANCE AFTER 8 MONTHS OF SCHOOL ON FIRST-YEAR TEACHER CONFIDENCE, SATISFACTION, AND PLANS TO CONTINUE TEACHING

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The current study examines further the data from the survey of first-year teachers conducted during April 1990. It is parallel to Technical Report 90-05 which reported these data after two months of school. Findings reported herein have implications for policy makers making decisions about support programs for first-year teachers.

The first four questions examine the potential effects of experienced support teachers (ESTs) on first-year teachers' (FYTs') confidence as teachers, their satisfaction, and their plans to continue teaching. A total of 235 surveys were analyzed. Information on the induction program is included in Study 90-01, while demographic characteristics of this population are included in Study 90-09.

This study examines six research questions.

1. When FYTs and ESTs teach the same subjects and/or grade levels, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?

2. When FYT/EST classrooms are in closer proximity, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?

3. Are first-year teachers who rate more highly the assistance provided by their experienced support teachers more satisfied as teachers? (b) more confident as teachers? (c) more likely to continue teaching?

4. When school demographies and personal characteristics are considered, what factors, if any, are related to FYT confidence, satisfaction, and likelihood to continue teaching?

5. To what extent do experienced support teachers and first-year teachers perceive the severity of FYT problems and the extensiveness of EST assistance as being the same?

6. Are there differences in FYT perceived problems attributable to ethnicity?

Instructional Assignments

The first research question explored the effects of ESTs being assigned from the same grade level or subject as FYTs. This has great implications for administrators who assign ESTs to FYTs. The research questions explored included: **When FYTs and ESTs teach the same subjects and/or grade levels, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?** These questions are explored in this section.

An analysis of variance was computed using Teach Same Grade or Subject as the dependent variable, and FYT confidence, satisfaction, ratings of EST effectiveness as a coach, and EST assistance as independent variables. None of the ANOVA were statistically significant; therefore it was concluded that there were no differences attributable to assignment of FYTs/ESTs to the same grade or subject area.

This finding differs from that reported in Study 90-05 that analyzed data after 2 months of school. In that study, it was concluded that having FYTs/ESTs teaching in the same grade level or subject made a difference in their perception of the assistance provided by ESTs (as a coach and general assistance). Apparently by the end of the year, even differences attributable to grade or subject were eliminated.

Classroom Proximity

In the second set of analyses, this study explored the research question: **When FYT/EST classrooms are in closer proximity, (a) are FYTs more confident? (b) are FYTs more satisfied? (c) do FYTs rate the effectiveness of their ESTs more highly as a coach? and (d) do FYTs rate the assistance by ESTs more highly?**

None of the ANOVAs were statistically significant, and therefore we concluded that proximity, at least for this group of teachers, did not effect their confidence, satisfaction, or ratings of their ESTs' coaching abilities or extensiveness of assistance. Proximity was not statistically significant in the study completed after two months of teaching, either.

Effects of EST Assistance

The third research question was: **Are first-year teachers who rate more highly the assistance provided by their experienced support teachers more confident as teachers? (b) more satisfied as teachers? (c) more likely to continue teaching?** Data related to this question were analyzed using the ANOVA. For this April study, no differences were found for confidence and satisfaction. Table 1 summarizes data related to continuing teaching.

Table 1: EST Assistance and FYT Plans for Teaching

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	4	10.08	2.52	3.24	.013
Within Groups	229	177.81	.78		
Total	233	187.88			

	EST Assistance		Plans for Teaching	
	n	%	Mean	S.D.
No contribution; may have impeded growth	10	4	3.40	1.26
Somewhat helpful	36	15	3.08	1.18
Supportive; gave me ideas and information	86	37	3.61	.78
Made beginning days of school much easier	52	22	3.67	.76
Outstanding, could not have survived w/o EST	50	21	3.68	.82

The greater the rating of the ESTs' assistance by FYTs, the more likely they are to remain in teaching. With the exception of those who felt their ESTs had made no contribution to them, the greater rating of assistance was accompanied by higher mean predictions that they would remain in teaching.

In October, after two months of teaching, the extent of EST assistance made a difference in FYT confidence, satisfaction, and tenure as a teacher. For all three ANOVAs, the results were significant and consistent: the greater the rating of EST assistance, the more likely the FYT was to be confident, satisfied, and to continue teaching. By April, the only ANOVA to yield significant results was to continue teaching; both confidence and satisfaction as a teacher was not dependent on FYT rating of EST assistance.

School and Personal Factors

The fourth question in this study explored a wide range of factors to determine which, if any, were related to FYTs' satisfaction, confidence, and plans to continue teaching. The research question was: **When school demographies and personal characteristics are considered, what factors, if any, are related to FYT confidence, satisfaction, and likelihood to continue teaching?**

We hypothesized that 24 factors might be related to FYT satisfaction with teaching, confidence as teachers, and their plans to continue teaching. These factors included: (a) for the FYT: gender, ethnicity, mother's education, and father's education; (b) for the school: ethnicity of students, proportion of students on free or reduced lunch program, student mobility, number of teachers in school, student achievement in mathematics and reading; (c) for the FYT's classroom: proportion of minorities in classroom, number of handicapped students; and (d) assessment by FYTs of their ESTs' coaching effectiveness and general assistance.

A summary of the results of a stepwise regression with confidence of first-year teachers as the dependent variable is found in Table 2.

Table 2: Stepwise Multiple Regression with Confidence As A Teacher as the Dependent Variable

	Beta Weights			
Variable	Raw	SE	Standardized	t
Variables in Equation				
Satisfaction	.332052	.080872	.393878	4.106*
No. Tchrs - Sch	-.014073	.005209	-.259700	-2.701*
Gender	-.420439	.200441	-.196647	-2.098*
White Stds in Sch	.061917	.029594	.195808	2.092*
(Constant)	3.747905	.481908		
Variables not in Equation				
Marital Status	.079181			.824
Ethnicity	-.098907			-1.052
Grade Taught	.027503			.257
Father's Educ.	.036379			.374
Mother's Educ.	.057648			.609
EST as a Coach	-.057105			-.583
EST Assistance	.029364			.302

Table 2: cont. Variables not in Equation

Tch Same Subj	.057976	.609
Prox. of EST Rm	.053377	.566
FYT Certification	.067803	.713
Age	-.050895	-.527
Black Stds in Sch	-.058785	-.579
Hspanic Stds-Sch	.058624	.614
Student Econ	.066072	.674
Std Attendance	-.056351	-.567
Std Mobility	.117868	1.231
Tea/ Std Ratio	.052088	.543
Read Achvmnt	.008226	.081
Math Achvmnt	.017183	.174

Correlation Coefficient

Multiple R	.52018
R Square	.27059
Adjusted R Square	.23585
Standard Error	.75498

* p. < .05

Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Regression	4	17.76	4.44	7.79	.0000
Residual	84	47.88	.57		

Four of the 24 variables loaded significantly on the confidence of FYTs at the end of the first year. These are Satisfaction, Number of Teachers in the School, Gender, and Proportion of White Students in the School. First-year teachers were more confident when they were more satisfied, in a school with fewer teachers, were female, and had a higher proportion of white students in the school.

Table 3 summarizes the stepwise regression for satisfaction.

Table 3: Stepwise Multiple Regression with Satisfaction As A Teacher as the Dependent Variable

	Beta Weights			
Variable	Raw	SE	Standardized	t
Variables in Equation				
Plns to cont tchg	.429875	.091382	.395693	4.704*
Confidence	.416656	.101464	.342832	4.106*
No. Tchers - Sch	.018212	.005539	.274518	3.288*
Marital Status	-.307981	.127868	-.195929	-2.409*
Read Achvmnt	.096702	.042325	.194404	2.285*
(Constant)	-.427726	.654556		
Variables not in Equation				
Gender	.081559			.985
Ethnicity	-1.314E-04			-.002
Grade Taught	-.107624			-.953
Father's Educ.	.023630			.287
Mother's Educ.	-.073598			-.898
EST as Coach	.124976			1.532
EST Assistance	.063525			.767
Same Subject	-.010153			-.120
Prox. of EST Rm	-.077453			-.949
FYT Certification	-.020840			-.248
Age	-.054846			-.621
Black Stds in Sch	-.004113			-.048
Hspanic Stds-Sch	-.029828			-.360
White Students	-.081877			-.964
Student Econ	.062095			.734
Std Attendance	.030482			.346
Std Mobility	-.067872			-.822
Tea/ Std Ratio	.018276			.216
Math Achvmnt	-.193653			-.882
Correlation Coefficient				
Multiple R	.69028			
R Square	.47649			
Adjusted R Square	.44417			
Standard Error	.76976			

* p. < .05

Table 3 cont.
Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Regression	5	43.68	8.74	14.74	.0000
Residual	81	47.99	.59		

Five of the 24 variables in the equation were significant. Contributing to first-year teacher satisfaction were plans to continue teaching, first-year teacher confidence as a teacher, number of teachers in the school, marital status, and the reading achievement in the school. FYTs were more satisfied when they were more confident, planned to continue teaching, were in a larger school, were single, and were in a school with higher reading achievement.

Table 4 includes the results of a stepwise multiple regression with the plans of the first-year teacher for continuing to teach as the dependent variable. The same 24 variables were entered into the equation.

Table 4: Stepwise Multiple Regression with Plans to Continue Teaching as the Dependent Variable

	Beta Weights			
Variable	Raw	SE	Standardized	t
Variables in Equation				
Satisfaction	.423470	.086247	.460051	4.910*
Tea/Std Ratio	-.055791	.026282	-.198901	-2.123*
(Constant)	2.162378	.372076		
Variables not in Equation				
Gender	-.042931			-.459
Marital Status	.099109			1.040
Ethnicity	-.048611			-.519
Grade Taught	-.074274			-.768
Father's Educ.	.047568			.501
Mother's Educ.	.119442			1.283
EST as Coach	.017847			.187
Confidence	-.107778			-1.094
EST Assistance	-.002109			-.022
Same Subject	.160444			1.740
Prox. of EST Rm	.004354			.046
FYT Certification	-.034253			-.347
Age	.124282			1.330
Black Stds in Sch	.032685			.342

Table 4, cont. Variables not in Equation

Hspanic Stds-Sch	-.129196	-1.376
White Stds in Sch	.121311	1.285
Economic (Lnch)	-.018661	-.196
Std Attendance	.015243	.156
Std Mobility	.003552	.038
No. Tchrs. - Sch	-.066030	-.687
Read Achvmnt	.111859	1.124
Math Achvmnt	.104960	1.060

Correlation Coefficient	
Multiple R	.52423
R Square	.27482
Adjusted R Square	.25755
Standard Error	.81890

* p. < .05

Analysis of Variance

	DF	SS	MS	F	p
Regression	2	21.35	10.67	15.92	.0000
Residual	84	56.33	.67		

Two variables were significantly related to first-year teachers' plans to continue teaching: their satisfaction as a teacher and the student-teacher ratio in the school. They were more likely to continue teaching when they were more satisfied and when there was a smaller teacher-student ratio in their school.

Perception of FYTs by FYTs and ESTs

As data were being analyzed, we wondered to what extent ESTs and FYTs perceived FYT problems and the extent of EST assistance the same. Data on 178 pairs of ESTs and FYTs were analyzed to answer the question, **To what extent do experienced support teachers and first-year teachers perceive the severity of FYT problems and the extensiveness of EST assistance as being the same?** Data in Table 5 summarize the results of the analysis of perceived problems.

Table 5: Strength of FYT Problems as Perceived by FYTs and ESTs

	FYT Perceived Strength of FYT Problem Mean	EST Perceived Strength of FYT Problem Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.68	2.73		
Student Motivation	2.14	1.98		
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	2.80*	1.97	6.39	.000
Personal Financial Problems	2.12*	1.55	4.54	.000
Managing Teacher Time	2.27	2.12		
Parent Cooperation	2.43*	1.88	4.20	.000
Amount of Paperwork	2.97*	2.49	3.65	.000
School Administration	1.46	1.42		
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.52	1.35		
Lack of Personal Time	2.89*	1.93	7.03	.000
Student Involvement	2.07	1.90		
Burn-Out	1.87	1.77		
Peer Acceptance	1.29	1.28		
Grading Students	1.67*	1.45	2.15	.033

For 5 of 14 factors, first-year teachers perceived their problems to be greater than their experienced support teachers. These problem areas related to *lack of materials and equipment, personal financial problems, parent cooperation, amount of paperwork*, and ***grading students***. Parent cooperation is an area ESTs should consider seriously for it was perceived by FYTs to be more serious at the end of the year than the beginning.

In a second analysis, the ratings by first-year teachers were compared with those of their experienced support teachers in terms of the assistance provided by experienced support teachers. Statistically significant differences were recorded for only 3 of the 24 factors. Because this proportion approaches chance, and because there was no pattern among responses, it was concluded that there were no differences is the perceptions of EST assistance by FYTs and ESTs.

Ethnicity

One of the questions posed during the analysis was: **Are there differences in FYT perceived problems and EST assistance attributable to ethnicity?** Three ethnic groups were represented in a large enough sample to use in analyzing data related to this question: White, Black, and Hispanic.

Parents' Education

When one-way ANOVAS were computed on the education of their parents, White first-year teachers were from homes where the education of both parents was greater than that of minorities. These data are included in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Father's Education and FYT Ethnicity

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	24.96	12.48	7.45	.0007
Within Groups	229	383.52	1.67		
Total	231	408.48			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Father's Education	3.19*	2.47	2.56

Table 7: Mother's Education and FYT Ethnicity

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	14.23	7.12	4.49	.0122
Within Groups	227	359.44	1.58		
Total	229	373.67			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Mother's Education	3.03*	2.60	2.42

FYT Problems and Assistance

To answer the question posed above, 28 one-way analyses of variance were computed; when differences among the three groups were statistically significant, the Tukey-HSD procedure was completed.

None of the 14 ANOVAs were significant for EST assistance. There were no differences in FYTs perception of the assistance provided by EST attributable to ethnicity.

Four of the 14 analyses of FYT problems were significant. These four analyses, included in Tables 8-11, are the same ones identified in the October study as being significant.

Table 8: Perceived Problems of Managing Class by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	49.46	24.73	12.66	.0000
Within Groups	228	445.38	1.95		
Total	230	494.84			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Managing Class	2.91*	1.93	1.94

Table 9: Perceived Problems of Student Motivation by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	17.27	8.64	5.48	.0048
Within Groups	228	359.62	1.58		
Total	230	376.89			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Motivating Students	2.27*	1.63	1.81

Table 10: Perceived Problems of Involving Students by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	16.41	8.21	4.69	.0101
Within Groups	228	399.34	1.75		
Total	230	415.75			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Involving Students	2.27*	1.65	1.81

Table 11: Perceived Problems of Grading Students by White, Black, and Hispanic FYTs

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	10.33	5.16	4.68	.0102
Within Groups	228	251.65	1.10		
Total	230	261.98			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Perceived Problems Grading Students	1.81*	1.28	1.53

White FYTs believe they have more problems managing the class and motivating students than either Black FYTs or Hispanic FYTs. White FYTs also perceive they have more problems involving students in classroom activities than Hispanics, and more problems grading students than Black FYTs.

In a related analysis, we wondered if ethnicity was related to the confidence of first-year teachers. The results of this analysis are included in Table 12.

Table 12: Confidence as a Teacher

Source	D.F.	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	6.88	3.44	3.65	.0276
Within Groups	232	218.96	.94		
Total	234	225.85			

	Ethnicity–Mean Rating		
	White	Black	Hispanic
Confidence as a Teacher	3.70	3.98	4.14*

Hispanic teachers were more confident than the other groups, and significantly more confident than White teachers.

Conclusions

Eleven conclusions can be drawn from these findings. These have implications for policy makers concerned with factors that make a difference in how first-year teachers feel about their circumstances after two months of school.

1. After 2 months, teaching the same grade level or subject was an important factor in FYT perception of EST assistance, but not after 8 months.

2. FYT classroom proximity to their EST has no effect on their confidence, satisfaction, or rating of EST effectiveness as a coach or EST assistance.

3. FYTs who rate their ESTs as more effective expect to have a longer tenure as a teacher, both after 2 and 8 months. After 8 months, their rating of EST assistance had no effect on their confidence or satisfaction.

4. FYTs are more confident when they are more satisfied, teach in a school with fewer teachers and more White students, and are female.

5. FYTs are more satisfied when they are more confident, teach in a school with fewer teachers and students have higher reading achievement, are single, and plan to teach a longer period of time.

6. FYTs are more likely to continue teaching when they are more satisfied and when they are in a school with a smaller teacher-pupil ratio.

7. ESTs underestimated FYT problems in six areas: lack of materials and equipment, personal financial problems, parental cooperation, amount of paperwork, lack of personal time, and grading students.

8. No differences in FYT perception of EST assistance were attributable to FYT ethnicity.

9. White FYTs perceived greater problems managing their classes, motivating students, involving students, and grading students, both after 2 months and 8 months.

10. The parents of White FYTs had more education than the parents of Black or Hispanic FYTs.

11. Hispanic teachers were more confident than White teachers.

Study 90-12

PERCEPTIONS OF CERTIFIED ELEMENTARY TEACHERS AND ALTERNATIVELY CERTIFIED TEACHERS AFTER TEACHING 8 MONTHS

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The Houston Independent School District instituted the second year of a support program during 1989-1990 to enhance the quality and retention of first-year teachers, with special attention to minority teachers and teachers in critical shortage areas. The Texas Education Agency supported the assessment of this program and some of its activities through a Chapter II grant. This is one of a number of studies of this program.

The present study analyzes the perceptions of first-year teachers who had completed a traditional teacher education program and those who were being prepared in an alternative certification program. The study sample was composed of 83 regularly certified elementary school teachers and 82 alternatively certified elementary school teachers. In April 1990, a survey was completed by the 165 teachers included in this study. A similar survey was completed in October 1989, two months after they began teaching. Results of that study are reported in Technical Report 90-06 in this series.

Five questions directed the current study.

1. After 8 months of teaching, to what extent did certified elementary teachers (CETs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems?

2. After 8 months of teaching, to what extent did alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems?

3. Were there differences in the problems faced by certified elementary teachers (CETs) and alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) during the first 8 months of school?

4. After 8 months of teaching, were there differences between CETs and ACTs in assistance provided by experienced support teachers (ESTs)?

5. After 8 months of teaching, were there differences between CETs and ACTs in their confidence, satisfaction, and plans to continue teaching?

Tables 1 and 2 provide information on the demographic variables of the certified elementary teachers and the alternatively certified elementary teachers, and information on their teaching assignments.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

	Certified Elementary Teachers		Alternative Certified Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender				
Male	6	7	19	23
Female	77	93	63	77
Age				
21-25	42	51	13	16
26-30	18	22	15	18
31-35	7	8	22	27
36-40	4	5	15	18
41-45	8	10	6	7
46-50	0	0	4	5
51-55	2	2	3	4
56-60	0	0	0	0
Missing	2	2	4	5
Marital Status				
Single	49	59	26	31
Married	28	34	46	55
Divorced	6	7	11	13
Racial or Ethnic Identification				
Black, not of Hispanic origin	8	10	22	27
Hispanic	11	13	20	24
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	2	0	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0
White, not of Hispanic origin	62	75	40	49

Table 1: Demographic Variables (cont.)

Father's Education				
Did not finish high school	12	15	16	20
Graduated from high school	19	24	17	21
Attended college, did not graduate	17	21	13	16
Graduated from college	21	26	21	26
Attained degree beyond bachelors	12	15	15	18
Mother's Education				
Did not finish high school	9	11	19	23
Graduated from high school	30	38	20	24
Attended college, did not graduate	14	18	18	22
Graduated from college	18	23	14	17
Attained degree beyond bachelors	9	11	11	13

When the demographic characteristics of certified elementary teachers (CETs) are compared with those of alternatively certified teachers (ACTs), CETs were more likely to be female, younger, single, and white.

More than three-fourths of all teachers were female; for ACTs this was 77 percent and for CETs, it was 93 percent. This difference between the two groups was statistically significant (chi sq = 9.42; p. = .0021). The mean age of CETs was 28.30 years and ACTs 33.09, a difference that was statistically significant (t = 3.87; p. = .0001). Fifty-nine percent of CETs were single while 55 percent of ACTs were married.

A greater proportion of ACTs than CETs were Black and Hispanic, while a greater proportion of CETs were White; a difference significant at p < .0001. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the fathers of CETs and 42 percent of fathers of ACTs attended college. Of their mothers, 34 percent of CETs and 30 percent of ACTs attended college. There were no significant differences in parents education between the two groups. Table 2 provides information on their teaching assignments.

Table 2: Teaching Assignment

	Certified Elementary Teachers		Alternative Certified Teachers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Level				
Preschool - Grade 3	57	69	62	75
Elementary Grades 4 - 6	26	31	21	25

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of CETs and 75 percent of ACTs taught in pre-school through the third grade, a difference that was not significant.

Extent of Problems and Assistance by Experienced Support Teachers

The first research question examined the importance of the problems of the 83 certified elementary teachers with the extensiveness of assistance by their experienced support teachers (ESTs). **After 8 months of teaching, to what extent did certified elementary teachers (CETs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems?** Table 3 includes the mean ratings of problems and EST assistance; t tests were computed to determine if these differences were statistically significant.

Table 3: Strength of CET Problems and Extent of EST Assistance, as Perceived by Certified Elementary Teachers

	Strength of CET Problem Mean	Extent of Perceived EST Assistance Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.69	3.16*	2.98	.003
Student Motivation	2.01	2.84*	5.30	.000
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	2.99	3.03		
Personal Financial Problems	2.44*	1.44	5.63	.000
Managing Teacher Time	2.42	2.71		
Parent Cooperation	2.62	2.50		
Amount of Paperwork	3.18*	2.56	3.88	.000
School Administration	1.53	2.95*	8.37	.000
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.74	2.69*	5.15	.000
Lack of Personal Time	3.11*	2.09	5.85	.000
Student Involvement	2.03	2.52*	3.02	.003
Burn-out	1.96	2.51*	3.36	.001
Peer Acceptance	1.23	2.74*	8.48	.000
Grading Students	1.80	2.83*	6.70	.000

Certified elementary teachers perceived that EST assistance was not so great as their problems in three problem areas: *personal financial problems, amount of paperwork,* and *lack of personal time.* In the other areas, EST assistance was more than adequate. ESTs typically viewed all three of these areas as not being of central concern to them in their role, and dealing with personal financial problems as not appropriate at all.

The second research question compared problems with EST assistance for alternatively certified teachers: **After 8 months of teaching, to**

what extent did alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) perceive their experienced support teachers (ESTs) to have assisted them in solving their problems? Data related to this question are included in Table 4.

Table 4: Strength of Alternatively Certified Teacher Problems and Extent of EST Assistance, as Perceived by ACTs

	Strength of ACT Problem Mean	Extent of Perceived EST Assistance Mean	t	p
Managing the Classroom	2.57	3.11*	2.38	.020
Student Motivation	2.07	2.84*	3.44	.001
Lack of Adequate Materials & Equipment	2.81	3.00		
Personal Financial Problems	2.13*	1.44	3.31	.002
Managing Teacher Time	2.46	2.79		
Parent Cooperation	2.47	2.36		
Amount of Paperwork	3.10*	2.59	2.23	.029
School Administration	1.54	3.11*	6.61	.000
Lack of Teaching Freedom	1.66	2.91*	4.98	.000
Lack of Personal Time	3.19*	1.93	5.52	.000
Student Involvement	1.96	2.45*	2.16	.034
Burn-out	1.79	2.48*	3.02	.004
Peer Acceptance	1.18	2.68*	6.09	.000
Grading Students	1.82	2.75*	4.09	.000

Alternatively certified teachers rated the assistance of their ESTs lower than the strength of their problems in three areas: *personal financial problems, amount of paperwork,* and *lack of personal time.* These same areas were identified as differences between FYTs and ESTs for ACTs in October after 2 months of teaching, and by CETs after 8 months of teaching. While the lack of personal time was not directly tied to the amount of paperwork, written comments of first-year teachers indicated that paperwork caused them inordinate time.

Perceived Problems of CETs and ACTs

The third research question was concerned with the importance of the problems of CETs and ACTs: **Were there differences in the problems faced by certified elementary teachers (CETs) and alternatively certified elementary teachers (ACTs) during the first 8 months of school?**

There were no differences in the perceived problems of ACTs and CETs after 8 months of school. This compared with their perceptions after 2 months when the mean ratings of problems by alternatively certified elementary teachers was greater in all 14 areas than those of certified elementary teachers and six areas were significantly higher.

Assistance by ESTs to CETs and ACTs

Experienced support teachers worked with first-year teachers on problem situations and in general areas. The fourth research question considered the extensiveness of assistance provided by experienced support teachers to CETs and ACTs: **After 8 months of teaching, were there differences between CETs and ACTs in assistance provided by experienced support teachers (ESTs)?**

There were no statistical differences between the assistance provided CETs and ACTs, as measured by the perceptions of these elementary teachers. In October, CETs rated the extensiveness of the assistance they received from their ESTs higher on 22 of 24 problem areas than ACTs; for 11 of the 24 areas, the difference was statistically significant. During the intervening six months, any such differences disappeared.

Confidence, Satisfaction, and Plans to Continue Teaching

The fifth research question was: **Were there differences between CETs and ACTs in their confidence, satisfaction, and plans to continue teaching?** Data related to this question are included in Table 5.

Table 5: Confidence, Satisfaction, and Future Plans of Certified Elementary Teachers and Alternative Certified Teachers

	ACT Mean	CET Mean	t	p
Confidence as a Teacher	3.75	4.04		
Satisfaction as Teacher	3.84	3.99		
Continue Teaching?	3.56	3.67		
Teaching Plans in Five Years	1.65	1.96		

While certified elementary teachers rated their confidence, satisfaction, continued teaching, and plans for five years greater than ACTs, none of the differences were statistically significant. There were no differences in these variables between the two groups.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Several conclusions can be drawn from these findings.

1. When the demographic characteristics of certified elementary teachers (CETs) are compared with those of alternatively certified teachers (ACTs), **CETs were more likely to be female, younger, single, and White.**

2. **After teaching 8 months, there were no differences between CET and ACT perceptions of the strength of their problems.** This contrasts sharply with their perceptions after 2 months, when ACTs indicated greater problems than CETs in six of 14 areas: *student motivation, managing teacher time, the amount of paperwork, school administration, lack of personal time,* and *grading students.*

3. **Both ACTs and CETs rated their experienced support teachers' assistance less than the severity of their problems in three areas: *personal financial problems, amount of paperwork,* and *lack of personal time.*** ACTs rated these same areas as under-assisted in October as well, while CETs identified only *personal financial problems.*

4. **After 8 months, there were no differences in ACTs and CETs in their confidence as a teacher, their satisfaction as a teacher, or their likelihood of being a teacher in five years.** After 2 months, CETs indicated greater satisfaction with teaching than ACTs but were more likely to leave teaching during the next five years.